

THE ESSENTIAL GOLDEN DAWN

An Introduction to High Magic



Chic Cicero
AND
Sandra Tabatha Cicero

The Essential Golden Dawn is a straightforward introductory guide to the Golden Dawn system, including both historical and magical perspectives. It provides succinct and reliable information that helps answer the novice's questions:

What is Hermeticism?

How does magic work?

Who started the Golden Dawn?

How did its teachings develop?

What makes this system of magic different
than other magical traditions?

What is the philosophy behind Golden Dawn magic?

What are its most important principles?

What do the symbols of the Golden Dawn stand for?

What happens during the process of initiation?

and

Is the Golden Dawn system of magic a spiritual path
I would like to pursue?

This One



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DAWN

AN INTRODUCTION TO HIGH MAGIC



Chic Cicero
AND
Sandra Tabatha Cicero

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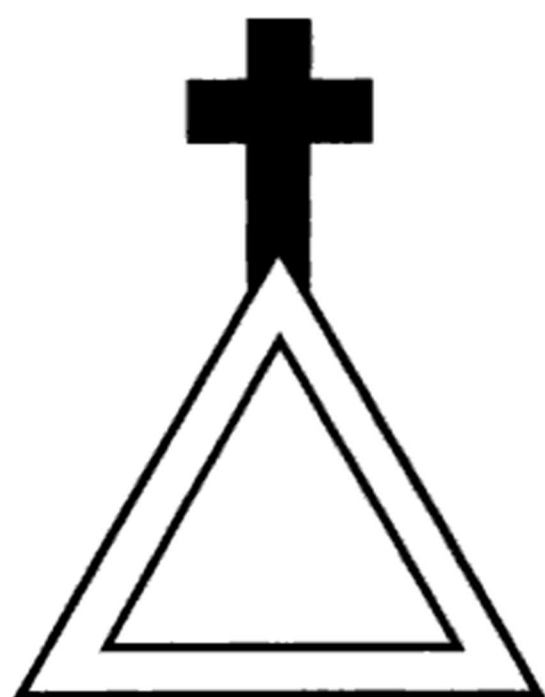
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The Cross and Triangle: The Symbol of the Golden Dawn

"On the Altar is a White Triangle to be the Image of that Immortal Light, that Triune Light, which moved in Darkness and formed the World of Darkness and out of Darkness. . . . The Red Cross above the White Triangle is an Image of Him Who was unfolded in the Light."

—FROM THE NEOPHYTE CEREMONY

"The Cross and Triangle together represent Light and Life."

—FROM THE ZELATOR CEREMONY

"The Symbols upon the Altar represent the Forces and Manifestation of the Divine Light, concentrated in the White Triangle of the three Supernals as the synthesis . . . The Red Cross of Tiphareth . . . is here placed above the White Triangle, not as dominating it, but as bringing it down and manifesting it into the Outer Order; as though the Crucified One, having raised the symbol of self-sacrifice, had thus touched and brought into action the Divine Triad of Light."

—FROM DOCUMENT Z-1: THE ENTERER OF THE THRESHOLD

"Even upon the altar of the Temple are symbols indicating the rise of Light. A red calvary cross of six squares as symbolic of harmony and equilibrium is placed above a white triangle—the emblem of the Golden Dawn. They form the symbol of the Supernal Sephiroth which are the dynamic life and root of all things, while in man they constitute that triad of spiritual faculties which is the intrinsically pure essence of mind. Hence is the triangle a fitting emblem of the Light. And the place of the Cross above the Triangle suggests not the domination of the sacred spirit, but its equilibration and harmony in the heart of man."

—ISRAEL REGARDIE, INTRODUCTION TO THE GOLDEN DAWN

Introduction

No organization has had a greater impact on Western Ceremonial Magic than that of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a magical fraternity that was founded in London in 1888 by a group of Qabalists, Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and Theosophists. One would be hard-pressed to find a magical Order in the U.S. or in Europe that has not borrowed heavily from the teachings of the Golden Dawn. The Order was not wealthy, nor did it attract large numbers of people. Nevertheless, nearly every portion of the Golden Dawn's curriculum of study has permeated and been absorbed into modern Western magic and esoteric belief. Standard Golden Dawn rituals and exercises, such as the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram and the Middle Pillar Exercise, have been virtually co-opted by numerous other magical fraternities, wiccan circles, and even New Age groups.

Actually, our opening statement needs a small clarification. The Order that was founded in 1888 was actually referred to by its founders as the Esoteric Order of the Golden Dawn or among its own members as the Order of the Golden Dawn in the Outer. The earliest public references to the Order named the Hermetic *Students* of the Golden Dawn. In an Order draft of the *Rules of Reconstitution*, submitted on March 20, 1902, the Order was referred to as the Hermetic *Society* of the Golden Dawn. More often than not, it was simply referred to as the Order of the Golden Dawn. It was not until Israel Regardie published his seminal books *The Tree of Life* and *The Golden Dawn* that the name Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn became the most common designation for the Order.

The Golden Dawn was not created to be a religion, although religious imagery and spiritual concepts play an important role in its work. The Golden Dawn was designed by its founders to be a Hermetic society of men and women—a fraternity of magicians and occultists—who were dedicated to the philosophical, spiritual, and psychic evolution of

humanity. It was also designed to be a school and a repository of esoteric knowledge, where students diligently learned the principles of occult science and the various elements of Western philosophy and practical magic before proceeding to actual magical work.

Students of this school sought out elevated spiritual experiences, inner evolution, and illumination through a series of initiatory rites—each grade attained leading to ever more rigorous areas of magical study and philosophy. Initiates diligently prepared themselves through study and meditation for passage from one grade to the next. They learned the Hebrew alphabet and committed a complex symbol system of correspondences (numbers, colors, planets, deities, gemstones, astrological signs, alchemical principles, etc.) to memory. Persistence and determination in these studies eventually led motivated students to become dedicated practitioners of the magical arts taught by the Order.

The Golden Dawn was the creation of Dr. William Wynn Westcott, a London coroner and prominent Freemason, who envisioned the concept of an esoteric Order open to both sexes after coming across an intriguing manuscript, written in cipher, that contained the outlines of a series of quasi-Masonic initiation rites. With the aid of two other Masonic Rosicrucians, who helped develop Westcott's translations of the rituals, the Isis-Urania Temple No. 3 in London was inaugurated in February of 1888, and the Golden Dawn was born.

During its most active period, from 1888 to 1903, other temples of the Order were established, including ones in Weston-super-Mare, Bradford, Edinburgh, and Paris. Over that period of time approximately three hundred and fifty people, one-third of whom were women, were initiated into the Esoteric Order of the Golden Dawn. Only one-third of these students advanced beyond the Outer Order grades to become members of the *Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis*, the Golden Dawn's Inner Order, where initiates performed rituals and exercises of practical magic as a regular part of their Order work. Only a handful or so of these ever made it beyond the grade of *Zelator Adeptus Minor*. (These figures do not include the later offshoot groups, the *Stella Matutina* and the *Alpha et Omega*, the two Orders that were to carry on the Golden Dawn tradition

after the original Order ceased to exist in 1903. Their requirements for attaining higher grades differed than those of the original.) A third offshoot, the Independent and Rectified Rite, dropped all magic from their curriculum and became a purely mystical fraternity.

Today, a full century after the Esoteric Order of the Golden Dawn splintered into three groups, interest in Golden Dawn magic has never been higher. Much of this is due to the efforts of Israel Regardie, who was determined to remove the veil of secrecy and the fog of superstition from the once-taboo subject of magic. It was Regardie's desire to restore the maligned reputation of magic from that of a primitive pseudo-science to that of a highly disciplined science of the mind—a division of modern psychology. His seminal book *The Golden Dawn*, as well as his other works, was instrumental in this regard. Hermetic students from all walks of life finally had access to the teachings of the Order and the spiritual discipline they represented. Since then, countless aspirants have availed themselves of this knowledge. Today, anyone can be a practicing Golden Dawn magician without belonging to an Order or magical group. It is for this reason that we can allude to the Golden Dawn "system" or "tradition" without referencing the "Order."

The question might be asked: What is there of value in these Victorian-era teachings that continues to draw people today? Why is the Golden Dawn system of magic so highly praised, so often imitated and appropriated, and so sought after by new generations of spiritual seekers?

A good part of the Golden Dawn system was not original; many of its constituent parts could be found sprinkled throughout the esoteric writings of the past millennium. However, the genius of the Order's founders was to synthesize a logical, systematic, and coherent system of practical magic and spiritual growth—to draw together the scattered fragments of the Western Esoteric Tradition, dispersed long ago by religious persecution, and create a workable system that was balanced in design, eloquent in principle, and profound in its knowledge—a system that, in its entirety, was greater than the sum of its parts, and a fraternity of men and women whose collective achievements as an Order were greater than the shortcomings of any one member.

The fact remains that many individuals who have truly and sincerely worked through the Golden Dawn system in all its various aspects have found the system to be quite effective in accomplishing what it undertakes to accomplish. Additionally, the Golden Dawn system is no relic of an out-dated era—far from it. The ancient knowledge embraced by it is perennial and enduring unless, in this age of selfishness and material greed, spiritual wisdom and personal growth can be considered outmoded. Like other schools of knowledge, the teachings of the Golden Dawn have grown, evolved, and adapted to meet the needs of today's students as new information continues to be uncovered by archeologists, scholars, psychologists, and twenty-first-century magicians, while remaining firmly aligned with the basic principles and ethos of the system.

The Golden Dawn system is a vital and living tradition that continues to enrich the magical practices and spiritual lives of its many practitioners.

To those readers who are already familiar with the Golden Dawn, little of what has already been stated will come as a surprise. Yet, even though several books have been written about the Golden Dawn in recent years, and most of the Golden Dawn's history, initiation ceremonies, ritual work, and teachings have been available to the public for some time, there are still an astonishing number of people who know little or nothing about it. Considering just how much Golden Dawn material has been assimilated by other groups, it is even more surprising that many people who are seeking out new forms of spirituality in this day and age have a skewed idea of what the Golden Dawn is and what it represents. In recent years, profiteers and the often pretentious and inaccurate information posted on the Internet about the Golden Dawn have only made this problem worse. And it is not helped by the fact that in today's fast-moving world, where time is at a premium, many people want their spirituality served up like fast food—quick, prepackaged, and with no work involved.

As a result, people who have no understanding of the discipline and training required of a Golden Dawn magician often seek out initiation for all the wrong reasons. Some inquirers have heard only that the Golden Dawn is a most powerful system of magic, but they know little beyond

that. Some are drawn to it because they assume “it will make them more powerful magicians”; “it will help them win friends and influence people”; “it will help them cast spells on their nasty neighbors”; or “it will help them win the lottery.” Amazingly, there are even some confused souls who come to the bizarre conclusion that “after performing a couple of the rituals in back of Anton LeVay’s *Satanic Bible*, it’s time to join the Golden Dawn”! This is a very sad commentary on the misconceptions that still exist concerning the Western Esoteric Tradition in general and the Golden Dawn system in particular. A large number of people in the greater magical community still have no idea of what the Golden Dawn is and what its teachings entail. Additionally, they have no understanding of the principles, standards, and ethos that are required of Golden Dawn magicians.

The Essential Golden Dawn attempts to deal with this problem. Many books written about the Golden Dawn simply don’t take into consideration the beginner’s need for uncomplicated language and simple jargon. The sheer size of some books, such as Israel Regardie’s essential text, *The Golden Dawn*, is enough to scare beginners away. Also, some texts are written from a purely historical viewpoint, while others are only concerned with the magical teachings of the Order. Few books address both issues. In writing this book, we intended to provide a basic, straightforward introductory guide to the Golden Dawn system, including both historical and magical perspectives.

Advancing through the various grades of the Golden Dawn and completing the required studies and ritual work has often been described as “the equivalent of a Ph.D. in magic.” So how does one go about describing the complexities of the Golden Dawn system to beginners in layman’s terms and not wind up writing a tome that weighs fifty pounds? In taking on this task, our approach takes the following into consideration.

Before anyone can decide whether or not the Golden Dawn system of magic is the path that they wish to devote much of their time and energy to, they need to have information about it. This information needs to be concise and accurate. Therefore, we include the following information in this text:

- 1) An introduction to the historical roots and principles of Hermeticism, otherwise known as the Western Esoteric Tradition. This is crucial to the understanding of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.
- 2) A short and accurate history of the Golden Dawn, including very brief biographical sketches of its most prominent members. The original Order of the Golden Dawn had a colorful history that included both high points and low points—periods of true genius as well as periods of embarrassment. In an age of rampant hero-worship and unbridled revisionist history designed to create new pockets of Golden Dawn lineage where none previously existed, we will make no attempt to glaze over the foibles of the original founders of the Order. As spiritual students, we must all learn from those great teachers who went before us, and we must also learn from their mistakes.
- 3) An introduction to the principles and laws of magic. The Golden Dawn system is well known as the premier magical system in the Western world today. Therefore, it is important that the beginning student have a clear understanding of what magic is and how it works, as well as the specific type of high magic emphasized in the teachings of the Golden Dawn.
- 4) An examination of the structure of the Golden Dawn system, including the various grades and degrees. An explanation of the hierarchy of the Golden Dawn Order system, including short descriptions of the officers who run, maintain, and perform certain ceremonial duties within a temple. A brief description of the correspondences and effects that each Golden Dawn initiation ceremony is meant to convey.
- 5) Basic ritual work. A small selection of rituals and exercises that the beginner can perform to acclimate to the Golden Dawn system of magic. This includes an explanation of the basic steps involved in Golden Dawn ritual, so that the beginner can create and perform simple Golden Dawn-style rituals.

- 6) A brief survey of the major components of the Golden Dawn's theoretical and practical teachings, including Qabalah, astrology, divination, spiritual alchemy, skrying and astral work, and Enochian magic.
- 7) The psychology of initiation. A brief examination of the spiritual, alchemical, and psychological effects of the initiatory process of the Golden Dawn. The basic principles and ethos that are embraced by the Golden Dawn system. The philosophy behind the system.
- 8) Appendices containing the following: a Golden Dawn timeline of historical events, and a selection of mottos from the original Order members. A glossary, bibliography, and index are also included.

This book was been designed for the beginning reader who needs an overview of the Golden Dawn system for a more complete understanding—understanding that is essential for making sound choices about one's spiritual path. If, after digesting this book, the reader finds that he or she is drawn to this system and wishes to learn more, it would then be appropriate to seek out further books on the subject. One good place to start would be the course of study recommended in our book on *Self-Initiation Into the Golden Dawn Tradition*.

The Golden Dawn system is complex in its entirety, but there is no reason why beginners should be overwhelmed when all they need is succinct and reliable information that helps answer their questions: What is Hermeticism? How does magic work? Who started the Golden Dawn? How did its teachings develop? What makes this system of magic different from other magical traditions? What happens during the process of initiation? Is the Golden Dawn system of magic a spiritual path that I would like to pursue?

For sincere students, *The Essential Golden Dawn* may answer some of these questions.



Hermeticism and the Western Esoteric Tradition

It has been our experience that many individuals who seek admission into a Hermetic Order have no idea what Hermeticism is. In order for any person to determine whether or not they are suited to following a Hermetic path, they need to have a clear understanding of the basic origins and principles of Hermeticism. Gaining such an understanding is not always a cut-and-dried matter for, in ancient as well as modern times, the Hermetic path has always been a syncretic tradition that borrows from other traditions that are in harmony with it. Nevertheless, it is possible to define certain basic characteristics of the Hermetic path by examining aspects of the tradition that are shared with other traditions. We can determine what they have in common and areas where they part ways.

Hermetism: The Origin of Hermeticism

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn takes its name in part from the Hermetic Tradition or *Hermeticism*, which is in turn named after a living incarnation of the Greek divinity Hermes, the god of communication. Hermes became identified with Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom and magic, and thus Hermes-Thoth became known as the patron god of all intellectual activity and all sciences, including astrology, astronomy, architecture, alchemy, mathematics, medicine, writing, biology, agriculture,

commerce, divination, and especially practical magic (see figure 1, page 4). Hermes was also said to be the greatest of all philosophers. He understood the secret nature of the universe and the spiritual physics that run it. Above all, Hermes was thought of as the great teacher of humanity—instructing men and women throughout the ages about technologies and spiritual knowledge that would improve their lives.

In the second century C.E., the figure of Hermes, complete with serpent-entwined caduceus wand, became immersed into the personage of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, or Hermes the Thrice-Great, a kind of avatar or living embodiment of the god Hermes-Thoth. Hermes Trismegistus was said to be an ancient Egyptian priest and magician who was credited with writing forty-two books on esoteric wisdom collectively known as the Hermetic literature or *Hermetica*.

The roots of the Hermetic Tradition can be traced back to late antiquity—the Hellenistic period at the beginning of the Common Era. This was a time when the great cultures of Greece and Egypt (anciently called Khem) came together in the melting pot of civilization that was created when Alexander the Great conquered the Mediterranean world and culminated in the cultural capitol of Alexandria. Spiritual wisdom from a plethora of different religions, philosophies, traditions, and cultures streamed into this most cosmopolitan city, where they blended into a new synthesis of philosophy, spiritual belief, and magical practice that would later become known as Hermetism (the ancient source of modern Hermeticism). Although this new fusion of beliefs was attributed to the Egyptian god of wisdom in human incarnation, and was ostensibly Egyptian, this new tradition embraced not only the timeless, lush reserves of Khemetic religion, magic, and philosophy, but also many facets of classical Greek philosophy and Greek paganism, especially the teachings of Platonism, Neoplatonism, Stoicism, Neopythagorism, and Iamblichan theurgy or high magic. To this mixture was also added the magical teachings and angelic hierarchy of Judaism, the cosmic dualism of Persian Zoroastrianism, and the many forms of Christianity and Gnosticism. These were the basic ingredients of ancient Hermetism.

Influences on Hermetism

Hermetism borrowed and adapted ideas from many spiritual paths and cultures that rubbed shoulders in the sophisticated city of Alexandria. Some of these have been mentioned in the preceding pages, but others are simply too numerous for the purpose of this book. Of the major influences on the development of Hermetism, a brief description is necessary:

Egyptian Religion and Magic

To the ancient Egyptians (3100–1000 B.C.E.), there was little distinction between religion and magic. If there was any difference at all, it was perhaps in the immediacy of magical as opposed to religious practices. In religion, a worshiper petitioned a deity through an intermediary or priest, while a magician invoked the deity directly. But, frequently, priests and magicians were one and the same.

According to the ancient historian Herodotus, the Egyptians were “religious to excess, beyond any other nation in the world.”¹ Egyptian religion was a complex, beautiful, and often misunderstood mixture of abstract monotheism and concrete polytheism. According to some Egyptologists, the inhabitants of the land of Khem believed in the concept of a creator deity who was eternal, omnipotent, self-existent, and incomprehensible to its human worshipers.

The [Egyptian] texts are full of explanatory asides and added notes, the accretions of speculating or inquiring scribes. . . . The difficult and perhaps insoluble questions that have bedeviled Christian theology are to be encountered in the literature of Ancient Egypt; the rival claims of the immanent and transcendent concepts of God, for example; the paradox about the uncreated Creator; the origin of evil; the male and female sides of the divine; or whether God exists in time. Such questions were already worrying the minds of men two thousand years before Christ.²

-
1. Herodotus, *Histories, Book II* (Great Britain: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1996), 37. Greek traveler Herodotus (484–430 [?] B.C.E.) journeyed far and wide in the ancient world. His *Histories* was the first great narrative history produced in the archaic world.
 2. Clark, R. T. Rundle. *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*. (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1995), 29–30.



Figure 1: Hermes Thoth

This unknowable divinity was sometimes referred to by the word *neter*, the suggested meaning of which includes ideas of "god," "divine," "strength," and "renewal." The polytheism of Egypt manifested itself in the vast number of divine, celestial, terrestrial, local, and lesser deities. These deities were considered as the various aspects, attributes, or extensions of the *neter*, manifesting in forms that could be visualized and comprehended by the human mind, loved by the human heart, and worshiped by a deeply religious people.

The Egyptians lived before the birth of philosophy as an independent way of thinking. They used their myths to convey their insights into the workings of nature and the ultimately indescribable realities of the soul. . . . Egyptian gods are nearer the stark archetypes of the unconscious mind than the Greek ones and, in a sense, they are more intellectual too, for they are expressing ideas.³

The Egyptians recognized the validity of several diverse explanations of natural phenomena and a cornucopia of deities, myths, and legends, which to modern thinking often seems confusing and contradictory. These were not thought of as opposing theologies but rather as alternative expressions of reality, each emphasizing a particular aspect of a force of nature.⁴

Three principles can be identified in Egyptian religion: (1) the common belief in a solar monotheism in the form of a Creator or "High God" whose power was especially symbolized by the life-giving rays of the sun; (2) a belief in the regenerative power of nature, which was symbolized in the life-giving waters of the river Nile and expressed in the polytheistic worship of numerous fertile gods and goddesses as well as sacred animals; and (3) the recognition of a deity who is human yet also divine, whose life in both the physical world and the spiritual world beyond death mirrors that of the perfected human life.

3. Ibid., 12.

4. Silverman, David P., *Ancient Egypt*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 118.

The belief in Osiris as a god/man was well established early in Egyptian history. He was a deity unlike all others in that he was an accessible god whom people could strongly empathize with—they could identify with him as one of them, although he was part divine. They believed that Osiris had walked the Earth, and ate and drank as they did. And, like humans, Osiris suffered and died—but was brought back to life with the aid of the other gods. Thus did he become the beloved god of resurrection and eternal life, for he set an example that the rest of humanity could follow. What the gods did for Osiris, the Egyptians reasoned, they might be persuaded to do for ordinary mortals. Many religious and magical ceremonies were designed to insure that after death the deceased would, like Osiris, rise again and inherit life everlasting.

The Egyptians were also among the first to develop the concept of the human soul, and much of their religion was dedicated to the welfare of the deceased in the afterlife. A human being was seen to have several component parts, including the *khat* (physical body), the *ka* (astral body), the *ba* (soul), the *khu* (spirit), the *sekhem* (vital life force), the *khaibit* (shadow), and the *ren* (name). The *ba* or soul was considered the seat of life in a human being. The word *ba* implies noble, sublime, or mighty. After death the soul was free to leave the tomb and ascend to heaven. However, it was thought that the spirit and the astral body could be imprisoned in the tomb, so magical formulae were used to keep this from occurring.

There were two kinds of magicians in Egypt. These included the trained priest-magicians of the temples and the “lay” magicians who were independent of any institution. The majority of them, however, were of the priest class. There were hundreds of temples dedicated to various deities, and their attendant priests had several different functions. Some were in charge of caring for the statue of the god (by providing food, clothing, etc.). Purification was also an essential practice—the priests bathed four times daily, shaved their heads, and only wore certain types of clothing.

The high priest was known as the *sem-priest* or “first prophet of the god.” Under him was an entire staff of priests known as *horologers*, whose

duty was to accurately determine the hours of the day and night. This was a crucial function, because various rites had to begin at specific times. The priests took note of the positions of the sun and the stars in order to pinpoint when the rituals should commence. There were also astrologer-priests who were the caretakers of a horoscope calendar that explained how human beings should behave on given days.

However, the priest-magicians were not from any of the above groups. They were to be found in a part of the temple known as the House of Life, which contained the temple library. The average layman would go to the House of Life if he had a problem and needed a magical spell or amulet. The priests would dispense magical charms for protection, interpret dreams, provide an incantation to cure illness, etc. The priest-magicians guarded their secret books carefully, and they were looked upon as very powerful and important individuals.

One aspect of Egyptian magic that would remain essential to the Hermetic Tradition was the importance given to divine names and words of power. As shown in the story of Isis gaining mastery over Ra, the Egyptians believed that knowing the secret name of a deity conferred great power to the magician who knew it. (This would later manifest in the Greco-Egyptian "barbarous names" of magic.)

Classical Greek Philosophy

If the inhabitants of Khem can be described as the most religious people of the ancient world, the Hellenes (Greeks) were certainly the most philosophical. From 600 to 200 B.C.E., new ideas were circulating in Greece and in the Greek cities along the coast of Asia Minor. It was here that Hellenic philosophers began a trend of questioning the reality of the traditional gods, while at the same time espousing theories of materialism and rationalism. One idea that began to take root in scholarly circles was that "all things come from One Thing." Although there were varying theories as to what the essence of this "One Thing" was, many philosophers agreed that everything in the cosmos was created out of the same material, a basic substance that permeated the universe and out of which the elements emerged. The philosopher Anaximander called this substance *apeiron* or "the boundless."⁵

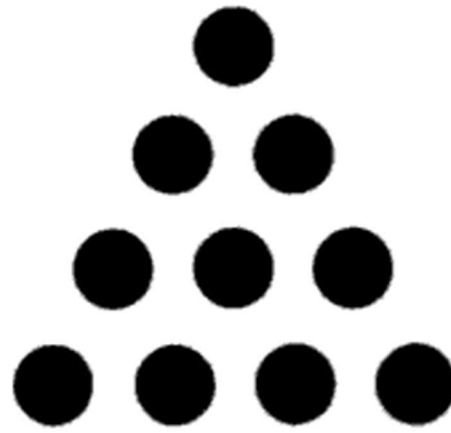


Figure 2: The tetraktys

Pythagoras, a mystic and magician as well as a philosopher, claimed that the essence of everything is number and that, at its core, reality is mathematical in nature—"All is number."⁶ Because he is credited with pointing out the significance of numbers in music and in the objective world, Pythagoras is often thought of in the nonmagical world as an ancient mathematician. To his followers, however, Pythagoras was a magus and a spiritual leader, and his students included women as well as men.

Unlike other philosophers of his time, Pythagoras believed in the existence of the human soul. He also taught reincarnation and a form of past-life regression. The organization founded by Pythagoras was more of a religious fellowship for the moral improvement of society rather than a true school of philosophy. Members of the group were to observe strict secrecy and loyalty. Pythagoras taught his followers that philosophical principles could be employed for spiritual purification, and that the human soul could ascend the heavens to unite with the divine. He also taught that certain mathematically derived symbols had a mystical importance.

Enamored with the sacred qualities of numbers, Pythagoras used numerically derived figures as holy symbols for his followers—including the pentagram and the tetraktys (see figure 2), a diagram in which the

5. This immediately brings to mind the Qabalistic concept of Ain Soph, "the limitless."

6. This idea is also reflected in the Qabalah, which regards numbers as divine emanations in the form of the Sephiroth. See chapter 6.

number four is exalted, but which also shows the importance of the first ten numbers through the unfolding of the Monad, Duad, Triad, and finally the Tetrad (numbers one, two, three, and four, respectively). These ten numbers were given specific attributions and were regarded as the progressive evolution of unity, which included the concepts of duality, multiplication, and synthesis. It is difficult to tell whether this philosophy influenced early Qabalistic teachings, or if Pythagoras was himself influenced by an earlier oral Hebrew tradition.

Other philosophers of the same era taught a form of monotheism that suggested God existed everywhere at all times, in matter and in nature. While some held that the reality of nature was static, others adopted the view that it was constantly changing.

Empedocles was the first to espouse the idea of the four elements in nature—fire, water, air, and earth. He also supported the notion that the universe was composed of two worlds, one spiritual and good, the other material and evil. Empedocles believed that human beings had two souls—the *psyche* or Lower Soul, which is finite, and the *daimon* or Higher Soul, which is immortal.

The philosopher Anaxgoras held that a divine mind or *nous* was the substance and power behind the physical universe. This mind created the universe through a whirling motion at the center of the cosmos.

Some of the later Greek intellectuals turned away from the extreme materialism and rationalism that dominated the teachings of earlier philosophers. They developed their own form of rational mysticism, possibly to reverse the moral deterioration that resulted when people stopped believing in the traditional gods. The main doctrine of Socrates was that the individual should be guided by an inner voice. But of all the classical Greek philosophers, it was Socrates' student, Plato, who had the most significant effect on the Hermetic Tradition.

Plato taught that a world of ideas or archetypes existed before the physical world was created. In other words, all ideas of everything in the universe exist in an unseen supernatural world—and all created things in the physical world are merely flawed and inferior copies of the divine originals. Thus Plato's philosophy developed a sharp dualism between the

tainted physical world and the perfect world of ideas. He believed that these two worlds were linked by an indescribable chaotic substance he called the *materia*, which evolved through natural processes into the four elements. But in order for the two worlds to interact and form the manifest world, the *demiourgos* or “creator god” patterned and created the universe. This idea was later incorporated into Gnostic teachings.

Another of Plato's theories was that soul of the individual lives on after death, and that it is judged—either to receive eternal rapture or eternal punishment in a place called *Tartarus*, where its transgressions would be forgiven over time. (Plato's beliefs on this matter were later adopted by the early Christians.) According to Plato, the soul was divided into three parts: the immortal portion, called the *logos*, located in the head and considered identical with the intellect; the *thumos* or will, located in the heart; and the *epithymia* or desire, which was found in the abdomen.

Plato believed in a World Soul and the idea that the individual human soul is capable of recovering knowledge from the divine world of ideas from which it came into being—if only the soul can be made to remember the knowledge that it has forgotten upon physical incarnation. He also believed that the stars and planets were simply higher beings.

Several of Plato's beliefs were borrowed or adapted by other groups, including the Neoplatonists, the Gnostics, and the early Christians. The similarity of some of his teachings to Qabalah doctrine is unmistakable. And Plato's hypotheses form the cornerstone not only of the Hermetic Tradition, but of Western philosophy as a whole.

The Greek Mystery Religions

The mystery religions developed and prospered during the time of Alexander the Great, when much of the known world, including Egypt and Persia, was becoming Hellenized. Mystery religions became popular as people grew tired of the moral decay that resulted from the cold materialism and abstract rationalism of the philosophers. People wanted and needed to believe in the gods again—not just the passive, state-sanctioned veneration of the traditional gods, but an active religious participation

that would deeply touch the emotional lives of worshipers. The mystery religions satisfied this need. Coinciding with the popular worship of the deities, there were secret initiatory ceremonies that were attended by a privileged few. The Greek word *mysteria*, or "mysteries," implied private or secret rites that were not intended for the general public.

The deities invoked and worshiped by these religions varied. The Samothracian mysteries, possibly the oldest of these cults, centered around the *Kabiri* or "great gods." The Orphic mysteries were said to have been founded by the Greek hero Orpheus. These rites focused on the god Dionysus-Phanes, the creator of Heaven and Earth and the bringer of Light. The mysteries of Isis and Osiris were played out in Egypt, along with the cult of Serapis in Alexandria. There were also the mysteries of Cybele and Attis, deities that were imported from Asia Minor, whose myths resembled those of the Babylonian divinities Ishtar and Tammuz. However, the most famous of the mysteries, the Eleusinian mysteries, was centered at Athens, which focused on the deities of Demeter, Persephone, and Hades. Later, the cult of Mithras, the Persian sun god, sprang up at outposts of the Roman Empire.

The exact experience undergone by initiates of these mystery religions cannot be determined for certain. This is because initiates held them in such high regard that, for the most part, they refused to reveal the secrets to outsiders. Apparently no one has ever betrayed their oath of secrecy to these rites. Consequently, there is little record of them. Even those initiates who later converted to Christianity steadfastly refused to break their oath of secrecy—such was the power of the mystery religions. But what little is known of the mysteries is that nearly all of them dealt with the ideas of death and resurrection (the death of one Kabir at the hands of the other three Kabiri, only to be brought back to life again; the dismemberment of Osiris at the hands of the evil Set, and Osiris' resurrection at the hands of Isis; the many deaths and reincarnations of Dionysus; and Persephone's descent into the underworld of Hades).

The reenactment of these myths served to instill within the initiate a sense of spiritual rebirth into a greater life—the triumph over death through the attainment of eternal life. They sought to take human beings

out of their mundane conditions into a divine rebirth—a direct awareness of humanity's spiritual essence. These secret rites emerged from the belief that higher divine wisdom and true spiritual experience could only be obtained by those individuals who were cleansed by certain disciplines. They attempted to reveal the secrets of the universe by generating spiritual ecstasy, or by a thoughtfully outlined series of initiations crafted to produce accelerated spiritual awareness.

Purification played an important role in these rites, along with processions, reenactments of certain myths, animal sacrifices, offerings, fasting, and a real or symbolic descent into the underworld, as well as a return from that underworld. The initiate would take an active role in these dramas, in all likelihood experiencing a symbolic death and rebirth.

The basic theme of the mysteries (that on some level the initiate experiences a resurrection from death) would later play a major role in several Hermetic circles, extending its influence to the alchemists and the Rosicrucians. It is also evident in the initiation rituals of the Golden Dawn.

The Greeks held that there were three types of knowledge: *mathesis* or knowledge that could be learned, *gnosis* or knowledge that could be gained through meditation or intuitive perception, and *pathesis* or knowledge that was felt. The mystery religions tried to instill enlightenment through all three, but especially through *pathesis*, by supplying the initiate the opportunity for direct personal experience of the higher teachings. They promised a transcendent type of experience or spiritual ecstasy that was lacking in the more popular forms of state-sponsored worship.

Early Christianity was considered by many at the time to be just another Greek mystery cult, with similar goals, mythology, terminology, and philosophical adaptations. One of the reasons that Christianity became very successful was that it was open to everyone, including slaves and women, whereas some of the other mystery cults, such as Mithraism, were restricted to men or individuals of high status. It was not until much later that one of the more dominant branches of Christianity was able to become a major political force that crushed those it considered rivals.

Stoicism

One of the more important schools of Hellenistic philosophy, in terms of its significance to the Hermetic tradition, was Stoicism. Some of the better-known Stoics included Zeno and Eratosthenes. Stoics believed that the objective of all knowledge was to provide humanity with a mode of conduct distinguished by tranquility of mind and assurance of moral worth. They also believed in an extreme form of materialism and stressed scientific research. They dismissed any form of reality other than the physical. Reason alone was the model for human existence and perception was the only basis for knowledge. To the Stoic mind, the manifest universe exemplified virtue; therefore, the virtues of moral worth, right conduct, duty, and justice were emphasized. Virtue was thought to bring happiness, and thus the Stoics pursued virtue, not for spiritual reasons but rather for mundane ones.

Although they felt that the universe was created by a universal nous or World Soul, they considered this force to be completely material and mundane. In addition they felt that all religious myths were allegories meant to convey philosophical truths. The stoics believed that the *logos* (under the mythological name of Zeus) transformed himself into the elements of the material world, but this was a natural process, not a spiritual one.

Stoic philosophy was often fatalistic and skeptical. Followers of Stoicism believed in predestination and reincarnation. However, they thought that in every incarnation the individual would live his or her life over again, exactly as in all previous lifetimes.

One of their greatest contributions to magic was their belief in cosmic sympathies, or the idea that all things within the cosmos are linked together in a logical and orderly fashion.⁷ In addition, the reverence paid by the Stoics to logic and the rational mind helped to instill within the Hermetic Tradition a healthy sense of skepticism that sought to test the validity of magical experiments and not merely accept all results at face value.

7. This was a forerunner to Levi's Law of Correspondences. See chapter 3.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism was a combination of Christian belief with the Greek mystery religions. However, like Mithraism, its striking similarities with Christianity caused it to be labeled as a heresy by those in power, and rival Christianlike heresies were stamped out far more viciously than most Pagan religions were. The Gnostic movement flourished in the Eastern Mediterranean area around the time of the birth of Christ and for many centuries after.

As stated earlier, *gnosis* meant knowledge, specifically knowledge gained through intuitive perception. The knowledge sought by the Gnostics was the knowledge of God through direct revelation. This knowledge was "secret" in that it could only come about as the product of specific realizations. And this knowledge was also beyond faith and beyond reason—the essence of the universe only revealed itself directly (thus secretly) to those who actively strove to transcend their mundane existences. Individual interpretation of spiritual truths was encouraged and, in fact, was considered a form of enlightenment. The ability to "channel" new revelations of Christ was considered a sign of religious adepthood. Revelation was a continuous process, not a rigidly established dogma.

Gnosticism had several factions; it was not one single belief system or united movement. There were as many different Gnostic sects as there were Christian sects. Early Christianity was likewise comprised of several different groups with various beliefs. But the diverse Gnostic sects can generally be grouped under two branches: the earlier, more "Jewish" type is called Sethian Gnosticism (named after Seth, the son of Adam), while the more "Christianized" form is known as Valentinian Gnosticism, so-called because of its main exponent, Valentinus.

The basic doctrine of the Gnostics was that the human spirit represented the divine essence ensnared in matter—that the human spirit (*pneuma*) was a spark of God trapped within an evil material world that God had nothing to do with. The world was actually created by the *Demiourgos* or Demiurge (an idea borrowed from Plato), a lesser creator god who was sometimes evil, sometimes just plain ignorant. Thus Gnostics believed in a fundamental dualism between man (the trapped god)

and the physical world (which was his prison). The human condition was defined as being part angel and part beast.

The worldview of the Gnostics was one of numerous levels of existence between the divine, Light-filled realm of God and the dark world of humanity wrapped in dense matter. The opaque physical world was ruled by various Archons or rebellious intermediary entities who were represented by zodiacal and planetary powers. Gnosis, then, was the knowledge of how the soul could escape from the evil world of matter, advance through the spheres of the unruly Archons, and return to its original abode of Light.

The Gnostics were devoted to the transcendent God, rather than the evil creator god. The transcendent God was believed to intercede in the imperfect world by offering his followers a means by which gnosis could be attained, through providing a redeemer or savior. In some Gnostic sects this redeemer was Sophia, the "wisdom" of God; in other sects it was her brother (or mate), Christ; and in some it was merely known as the *Logos* or "word." The goal of the savior was to implement the separation of this mixture of physical matter and divine Light. The savior also served as an example for the individual soul to follow in its quest to return to the world of Light.

An important Gnostic text called the *Pistis Sophia*, or "Faith Wisdom," tells the story of Sophia, who was once a heavenly being but, through a combination of ambition and deception, had fallen into a chasm midway between the world of dense matter and the divine Light (echoing the human condition). By repentance and faith, and assisted by Jesus the Savior, she gradually ascends through the ten Aeons to reclaim her former station in the Light. This was yet another symbolic death and rebirth such as the type espoused by the Greek mystery religions. One major difference is that in Gnosticism the main mystery is that of the transcendence of the Christos as the savior.

All in all, the Gnostic view that humanity is imprisoned in matter is not so very different from the view of most contemporary religions, which teach that the material world is an illusion while the spiritual world is the realm of truth.

The general composition of Gnosticism was syncretic. It borrowed bits and pieces from other traditions, including Zoroastrian dualism of Light versus Dark, the Eastern belief in reincarnation, Babylonian astrology, and the reverence for secret (barbarous) names and words of power as used in the pagan mysteries. But what truly set Gnosticism apart was its conviction in the belief that spiritual truth was highly personal. This is one of the main tenets of Gnosticism that is still held in great regard by today's Hermeticists.

Neoplatonism

Of all of the early influences on the Hermetic tradition discussed so far, none had a greater impact than Neoplatonism. The later Hellenistic followers of Plato revered the early classical philosopher as a writer who had been divinely inspired. The teachings of Plotinus (204–270 C.E.) dominated Greek philosophy until the sixth century C.E. He criticized the Gnostic movement for what he considered a debasement of Plato's teachings. Although many ideas promulgated by the Neoplatonists bore a certain resemblance to Gnostic ideas, one major exception was that an evil Demiurge who created and ruled a prison of matter was nowhere to be found in the teachings of Plotinus and his followers.

Plotinus managed to blend the rational, logical approach to the nature of the universe, as embraced by the classical philosophers, with mystical experience. He interpreted the theories of Plato in the light of Hellenistic mysticism, attempting to account for spiritual experience rather than to merely satisfy intellectual curiosity. Plotinus believed that God was entirely outside of human comprehension.

The teachings of Plotinus embraced the theory that the one God (*protos theos*—the “first god”) creates various emanations (*hypostases*) endlessly from himself without diminishment, and the divine intellect (*nous*) is the main creation of God. All of these emanations were considered degrees of Light-energy, which were independent of time and space. Intellect, as Plotinus knew it, was not a cold, philosophical abstraction but rather a vital and jubilant state of perfection that has two goals: The first is to return to the godhead, and the other is to seek unity and good-

ness for its own sake. For the latter goal, intellect divides itself into several individual lives or focal points of creative energy, which correspond to the archetypal forms and concepts of Plato. Plotinus also made a distinction between the spiritual experience obtained through contemplation of God and the experience of ultimate union (or oneness) with the divine intellect.

According to Plotinus, there is a lower divine level known as the soul (*psyche*) that attempts to manifest the ideas born in the intellect. Through this process the natural world came into being. The natural world itself is composed of a concentrated entity known as the World Soul (*pantos psyche*), to which human beings are related through intellect, but not created by nature itself (humanity is within nature but not *from* nature). The psychological composition of humanity corresponds to this greater universe: The physical body corresponds to the physical world of matter, the soul or ordinary consciousness relates to the World Soul, and the higher perceptive faculties conform with the divine intellect. However, Plotinus believed that in most humans the higher intellectual powers are asleep, and it is the duty of the individual to arouse them. One of the goals of the Neoplatonist was the unification of all three segments of the individual, a process that forecast the objective of modern psychology by several centuries.

The method of awakening the intellect, Plotinus surmised, was through constant interaction in the natural world through reincarnation—something that took several lifetimes to achieve. The individual does not remember the previous incarnations because the eternal portion of consciousness is the Higher Self, which is on the level of divine intellect. The lower self or personality is merely a reflection of the Higher. But the soul or *psyche* of the individual is incorruptible. Thus, at death, the terrestrial experiences of the lower self are absorbed by the Higher Self before it again reflects itself forth into incarnation.

Plotinus did not promote either spiritual or magical practices because he believed that the individual attained illumination by philosophical musing. However, he established the concept of the existence of altered states of consciousness. He also thought that the ultimate aim of human existence should be a return to the godhead.



Figure 3: Iamblichus

Another Neoplatonist who believed very much in the high magical practices of theurgy was Iamblichus, who had a great interest in the Egyptian mysteries (see figure 3). The works of Iamblichus were very important to the later development of ceremonial magic in the Hermetic tradition.

One form of practice explored by Iamblichus was the invoking of a deity or spirit into a statue. Another method was to invoke the deity into a person, resulting in complete identification with the deity in order to awaken the Higher Self. The goal of such Neoplatonic magical techniques was spiritual growth or the attainment of answers to spiritual questions concerning the nature of the universe.

In later times, Neoplatonist and Neopythagorean magicians utilized the Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster, which dated from the second century C.E., in their magical practices. (Although the Oracles have only survived to the present day in fragmentary form, they are quoted extensively in the rituals of the Golden Dawn.)

Hermetism

The earliest Hermetists were not as visible, nor as organized as were other philosophical and spiritual schools of the time. In all likelihood, ancient Hermetists probably met and studied quietly in small groups under the guidance of a teacher, much as modern Hermeticists do today. They almost certainly would have spent much of their time in or near sanctuaries, and would have also participated in the Pagan celebrations. Many of them were probably Egyptian by birth, although educated in the ways and philosophies of Greece.

The teachings they studied would have in all probability been similar to that contained in the books attributed to Hermes Trismegistus or Hermes the Thrice-Great. The vocabulary used by the Hermetists to describe the heavenly realms was virtually identical to that used by the Neoplatonists. However, there exists in the Hermetic writings a religious zeal and passion, concluding with a sense of complete union with God, that is rarely found in the writings of the Greek philosophers. This intensity of spiritual fervor may have been the result of the Egyptians,

who were "religious beyond excess," adopting the ideas of Greek philosophy to create Hermetism.

The principles and values espoused by Hermetists can be found in the texts attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, who showers praise on the mystery cults and the sanctity of the "holy land" of Egypt. The Way of Hermes strongly promoted ideas of piety, purity, and morality. The followers of Hermes the Thrice-Great never criticized the common religion and morality of those they encountered, but the more they acquired gnosis, the more they tried to instill a sense of profound conscious awareness and spiritual depth into the beliefs of those around them.⁸

It is important to remember that Hermetism was not a system carved in stone, but was a way of spiritual evolution with many levels of attainment. There was no single system of Hermetic theology or doctrine and there are wide differences between the teachings contained in the various books of Trismegistus. However, the Hermetic teachings display a certain general similarity that would logically occur as a result of systematic instruction and a shared environment. For the Hermetist, the attainment of Gnosis was not an end in itself, but a mere beginning:

Thou see'st, son, how many are the bodies through which we have to pass, how many are the choirs of daimones, how vast the system of the star-courses [through which our Path doth lie], to hasten to the One and Only God. For to the Good there is no other shore; It hath no bounds; It is without an end; and for Itself It is without beginning, too, though unto us it seemeth to have one—the Gnosis. Therefore to It Gnosis is no beginning; rather is it [that Gnosis doth afford] to us the first beginning of its being known. Let us lay hold, therefore, of the beginning and quickly speed through all [we have to pass]. 'Tis very hard, to leave the things we have grown used to, which meet our gaze on every side, and turn ourselves back to the Old [Path].⁹

In the increasingly multicultural and cross-pollinated Hellenistic world, it became ever more difficult to distinguish Gnostics, Neoplatonists, and Hermetists from one another. However, it is important to the

8. "Gnostic and Hermetic Ethics" by Jean-Pierre Mahe, *Gnosis and Hermeticism: From Antiquity to Modern Times*, Van Den Broek and Hanegraaf, 21–36.

9. An excerpt from the *Corpus Hermeticum*, translated in 1906 by G. R. S. Mead in *Thrice Greatest Hermes* (London: Stuart & J. M. Watkins, 1964 reprint).

understanding of Hermetism (and the later form of Hermeticism) to point out the differences as well as the similarities.

A Summary of Important Influences on Early Hermetism

The influence of ancient Egypt on the Hermetic path cannot be overestimated. Not only did the Khemetic religion set the standard for magical formulae, ritual techniques, invocations using names of power, devotion to the gods, and the model of a trained priesthood of magicians, the Egyptians also formulated some of the earliest concepts about the component parts of the human soul.

The classical Greek philosophers opened up completely new ways of looking at the universe and humanity's place within it. They presented rational and abstract explanations of natural phenomena that relied less on the mythologies of the traditional gods and more on the idea that everything in the universe is created from a single source or essence. Insights concerning the four elements, the mystical significance of numbers, the evolution of the human soul, and a divine world of ideas or archetypes that exists beyond the physical world were explored in depth. The influence of the great philosophers would extend not only to the principles of Hermetism, but also to the values, ideology, and thought of Western civilization as a whole.

The Greek mystery religions provided what the classical philosophers had discarded—a deeply personal relationship between human worshipers and their beloved deities. Not satisfied with the stale, exoteric, public religion of the time, worshipers were drawn to meaningful rituals and secret rites that instilled a sense of spiritual rebirth. These religions also provided their followers with a sense of belonging to a like-minded community or fellowship.

The Hellenistic philosophy of Stoicism provided an emphasis on virtue and moral conduct as well as a rational and scientific approach to the larger questions about the origin and nature of the universe. They extolled a belief in cosmic sympathies and the idea that myths about the gods were allegories of philosophical truths. All of these ideas would



Figure 4: Hermes Trismegistus

become important to the Hermetic path, particularly in the Hermetic art of alchemy. Yet in their total denial of everything spiritual, the Stoics carried these ideas to the extreme in favor of a strict and often fatalistic materiality. In this, they parted ways with the Hermetists.

The vocabulary and basic concepts used by the Neoplatonists to describe their philosophy is, in many ways, virtually identical to that used by the Hermetists. The Hermetic concept of the transcendent God was similar to that espoused by the Neoplatonic philosophers. However, Hermetism was more of a religious doctrine rather than a philosophical one. Except for Iamblichus and his followers, Neoplatonism did not particularly promote spiritual or magical practices. Consequently, the Hermetic God is less abstract and more personal than the *protos theos* of the Neoplatonists.

It is sometimes easy to confuse Gnosticism with Hermetism. Both groups employed Platonic terminology and both believed in the existence of a transcendent God as well as lesser celestial and terrestrial deities. Both Gnostics and Hermetists placed great emphasis on spiritual knowledge gained through divine revelation (gnosis) and the final exaltation of the soul through union with its source (God). However, for the Hermetist, gnosis was a means to salvation, not the end result in and of itself, but only the beginning. Both systems taught that the deliverance of the soul from the bonds of the material world resulted in its salvation. However, it appears that the Hermetists stressed the importance of receiving methodical training in the "art of Hermes" that was followed by the mystical experience of initiation into the Hermetic mysteries. By contrast, the Gnostics were not as concerned with intellectual training as a path to gnosis, but rather in receiving the gift of gnosis as the direct result of salvation and enlightenment.¹⁰ Also, the Hermetists believed that God, although unknowable in essence, could be comprehended by the human mind through contemplation and philosophical reasoning. The Gnostics placed much less faith in the nous or mind of humanity.¹¹

10. "Gnosticism and Hermetism in Antiquity: Two Roads to Salvation" by Roelof Van Den Broek. *Gnosis and Hermeticism: From Antiquity to Modern Times*, Van Den Broek and Hanegraaf, 1-20.

11. Ibid.

Finally, unlike the Gnostics, who believed that the cosmos was an evil creation of an evil creator god, the Hermetists believed that the universe was God's wondrous (and basically good) creation. They had no concept of an evil Demiurge. The human body was not seen so much as a material prison of the soul, but rather as an image of God's creative majesty.

Gnostics and Hermetists had similar spiritual goals, but they worked to achieve them in vastly different ways.

The Hermetic way implied instruction in the nature of the cosmos and of man. In that process of instruction use was made of all kinds of human knowledge, theories of space and movement, the science of astronomy and astrology, medicine, and also sometimes, magical practices. But the purpose of all this was to make the world transparent toward God. The Hermetic way finally led to initiation in the divine mystery, to knowledge of God, to God himself as the source of being.¹²

The Hermetic Literature

The Hermetic texts or *Hermetica* were said to have been written by the legendary priest and magician Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, the namesake of the Greco-Egyptian deity Hermes-Thoth. Although the Hermetic books were not markedly different from other contemporary texts on magical philosophy, these works became extremely important because of the high position given to them by Renaissance thinkers and magicians. They were also judged to be acceptable to the Christian church for nearly 1,500 years—highly unusual for books written by an Egyptian initiate who was named after a Pagan god. And because of this remarkable acceptance, the books have played an important role in Western culture.

There were actually two classes of Hermetic literature, obviously not written by the same person, but by several people. The first, more popular and practical type, which dates from the third to first century B.C.E., deals with practices such as astrology, alchemy, the secret properties of plants and gemstones (which later developed into the system of occult

12. Ibid., 12.

correspondences), magic, medicine, and the making of talismans. The second, so-called "learned" type, which dates from the second and third centuries C.E., is comprised of several books about religious philosophy. Most important among these books are the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius*. These books, as well as *The Emerald Tablet* and the *Divine Pyramander*, describe the creation of the universe, cosmic principles, the soul and nature of humanity and other spiritual beings, man's desire to know God, and the way to achieve spiritual rebirth. However, both types of Hermetism, "popular" and "learned" (or magical and philosophical), shared the same philosophical root, and these classifications between them are a purely modern distinction invented for the sometimes delicate sensibilities of modern scholars. Such a distinction would have been meaningless in ancient times, just as it is for modern magicians.

Other texts were also attributed to the *Hermetica*, including some found in the Gnostic Library discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945, and many of the Greco-Egyptian magical papyri, which date from the second to fifth centuries C.E.

The astrological, magical, and alchemical portions of the Hermetic works formed the basis of what would later become known as Western ceremonial magic. Lists of occult correspondences, invocations of deities, and rituals for summoning spirits were all to be found in the *Hermetica*. The more philosophical ("learned") books even furnish a rationale for conducting experiments in ritual magic. However, the greatest practical magic that was contained within the texts had to do with the perfecting of humanity—the recognition of the divine spark within the human soul, and the means by which this spark could be returned to the godhead.

Originating in Egypt under the guise of a body of knowledge from a single well-respected source (Hermes Trismegistus), these two strands of Hermetic literature, like their two parent cultures of Egypt and Greece, came together.

Christianity and Hermetism

By the fourth century C.E., one sect of Christianity had completed its grip on power. The reason why the church did not attempt to eradicate the

Hermetic literature, as it had done with other Pagan books, was because many of the spiritual ideas embraced by the books were very similar to Christian principles. Byzantium scholars preserved some books of the *Hermetica* during medieval times. Thinking that the Hermetic books were much older than they actually were, Christian officials thought that they were the work of an enlightened ancient Pagan who envisioned the forthcoming Christian "truths." Had they known that the books were penned by a not-so-ancient Hellenistic Pagan thinker who was influenced by Gnostic and Neoplatonic ideas, they would have no doubt branded the texts as heresy and committed them to the fire.

As it was, many Pagans, voluntarily or not, were becoming Christians. When Hermetists converted to Christianity, it was not a simple one-way transfer of allegiance from a Pagan theology to a Christian one. They surely retained much of their deep-seated ways of thinking, feeling, and experiencing deity. Although the Hermetists must have made up only a small minority of the larger Christian community, they no doubt had an influence on their colleagues. And they would have certainly been inclined to focus on those aspects of Christian thinking that were closest in agreement with Hermetic principles. Hermetic teachers were passionate about spiritual matters, and they would have likely been just as fervent within their new religion. Such individuals probably would have been leading lights within the Christian monasteries of fourth-century Egypt and principle figures in discussions of theology in Alexandria.

According to Walter Scott in his introduction to the *Hermetica*:

It is not to be supposed that the Christian Church took over this or that theological dogma ready made from Hermetists or from any other Pagans. And yet the Christian Church took over a great deal; for it took over the men themselves. . . . Some of them may have held out and stuck to Paganism . . . (B)ut most of them must have turned Christians. And what did that mean? In some respects the change would not be a large one. The Hermetist, when he became a Christian, would not have so very much to unlearn. If one were to try to sum up the Hermetic teaching in one sentence, I can think of none that would serve the purpose better than the sentence "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." To that extent at least the Her-

metist had nothing new to learn from the Christian catechist. He had been accustomed to aspire towards union with God . . . ¹³

Hermes Trismegistus in the Renaissance

Once Christianity became the dominant political force, rival philosophies, including Hermetism, were eventually squelched. Here and there different Gnostic sects would again surface briefly, and the Hermetic literature remained to a certain degree accepted by the established religious hierarchy. Early church fathers even sanctioned the inspirational books of Hermes. Thus when the social climate of the Dark Ages gave way to the Renaissance, the works of Hermes were already in good standing and readily available for religious and humanist scholars alike who craved a return to the wisdom of the ancient world. Along with the renewal of interest in antiquity, the celebrated name of Hermes Trismegistus was given new reverence.

In the mind of the Renaissance philosopher-magician, Hermes Trismegistus had been a real person who, along with Zoroaster and Moses, was thought of as one of the great teachers—the *prisci theologi* who had foreshadowed the teachings of Christ.

In 1460, a monk brought a manuscript of the *Corpus Hermeticum* to Cosimo de Medici, one of the most powerful and influential nobles in northern Italy—not to mention an avid philosopher. Three years later, de Medici commissioned Marsilio Ficino, himself a philosopher, scholar, and magician, to translate the book. The works of Hermes Trismegistus were considered so important that Ficino had to put aside translation of the entire works of Plato until after the *Corpus Hermeticum* had been translated.

As a result of this fortuitous mistake in dating the texts, combined with a fresh and positive interpretation of natural magic by Ficino, the subject of magic, once banished into the subterranean darkness by the

13. Scott, Walter. *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings Which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus* (Melksham, Wiltshire, Great Britain: Solos Press, 1993), 44.

church, ascended to the new light of day as a learned topic for scholarly, philosophical discussion.

The final and perhaps most important element of the Hermetic Tradition was added by Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), a humanist and student of Ficino's Platonic Academy in Florence. Mirandola was the first prominent Christian scholar to embrace the Jewish Qabalah, placing it at the forefront of the Hermetic Tradition, and thus changing that tradition forever. The work of Mirandola and those who came after him transformed ancient Hermetism into modern Hermeticism, through the same syncretic process that produced its archaic ancestor. Since the late fifteenth century the Hermetic Tradition—modern-day Hermeticism—has included the teachings of ancient Hermetism, alchemy, astrology, Christianity, Neoclassicism, the natural magic of the Renaissance scholars, occult philosophy, and Qabalah. At the core of this tradition is the attempt to unite different Western traditions in an effort to uncover the single matrix connecting them all. The worldview adopted by the Renaissance Hermeticists was essentially a magical one, and it came to be increasingly considered as an esoteric tradition (hidden, or what is intended for a small inner group) as opposed to the exoteric (outer) faith of the masses.

Later Additions to Hermeticism

For two centuries, Hermes Trismegistus' high reputation as one of the *prisci theologi* remained unchallenged. However, in 1614, a scholar by the name of Isaac Casaubon confirmed that the author of the *Hermetica* lived during the post-Christian era, not during the distant times of ancient Egypt. But Casaubon's view was largely ignored, for several mystical thinkers of the seventeenth century, such as Robert Fludd and Athanasius Kircher, continued to venerate the Thrice-Great Hermes. The seventeenth century was virtually a Hermetic golden age.

This golden age brought a new element into the fold of the Hermetic Tradition—Rosicrucianism, an esoteric path that emphasized alchemy, Qabalah, Christian mysticism, Christian theosophy (the multileveled interpretation of Scripture), and spiritual transformation through Christ

consciousness. In the eighteenth century, elements of Freemasonry, particularly Masonic ritual structure, were firmly imbedded into the Hermetic path.

The occult revival of the nineteenth century, spearheaded by men such as Eliphas Levi, brought an increased interest in the Hermetic Tradition. When the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was founded in 1888, the name of Hermes was again invoked to describe a system of Western occultism that combined the many threads of the Hermetic Tradition into a unified body of teaching, practical and philosophical, designed to improve the spiritual health of humanity. Consequently, Hermeticism began to enjoy a second renaissance, centuries after the first. The Western Esoteric Tradition, the magic and mysticism of the Western world, was reaching its maturity.

Hermetic Principles of the Golden Dawn

Having been born out of a blended variety of spiritual beliefs, philosophies, cultures, and practices, Hermeticism defies most attempts to place it within strict confines of doctrine and dogma. It cannot be described as one particular spiritual system or school of thought. As a living tradition of philosophical principles and magical practice, the Western Esoteric Tradition is not unlike an ancient river of wisdom whose waters continue to nourish large tracts of land while at the same time branching off into several lesser tributaries. This great river of spiritual thought has continually fed several smaller streams, of which the Golden Dawn is one form.

The essence of the Hermeticism embraced by the Golden Dawn is governed by the following principles:

- It is primarily concerned with the spiritual traditions of Western civilization. This includes the ancient Egyptian, Greco-Egyptian, and Roman mystery religions, Neopaganism, Neoplatonism, Iamblichan theurgy, alchemy, Qabalah, Gnosticism, Rosicrucianism, and mystical Christianity.
- It holds a belief in both the Macrocosm and the Microcosm—a belief in a Creator and Creation—and it seeks to comprehend both.

- It is ultimately monotheistic although it conceives of the Divine Unity or ultimate Divinity as emanating itself through a multitude of forms, aspects, characteristics, and manifestations. In other words, the transcendent God who is the ineffable Source of All presents itself to humanity in the forms of various gods and goddesses for our better understanding and development. Thus, although the system may appear to be outwardly polytheistic, all deities are thought to be the various faces and rich expressions of the ultimate Divine Unity. Although the cosmos appears to be diverse, at its most fundamental level, All is One.
- It maintains that the Ultimate Divinity is both immanent (within everything) and transcendent (beyond everything), and that the universe is divine. It teaches tolerance for all spiritual paths.
- It holds that humanity is in a “fallen state,” i.e., that we have become separated from the divine (through involution) and that we seek “the Way of Return” back to unity with the divine (through evolution). The Way of Return requires aspiration and discipline. It cannot be attained without hard work and dedication. And although many ancient and sacred texts can hold valuable, profound, and precious keys that provide guidance toward the Way of Return, no text is thought to be infallible or free of error. Although spiritual teachers can provide guidance, each individual aspirant must ultimately tread the way back to the divine alone.
- It teaches that as part of the discipline needed to return to the divine, human beings must learn to understand the invisible realms that lie hidden behind the manifest universe. To that end, it embraces the practices of esoteric spirituality, mysticism, and the magical arts. Armed with the knowledge gained from esoteric practices, the highest aspiration of the Hermeticist is toward union with the divine, often called the goal of the Great Work.

It can be said that the figure of Hermes has been noticeably present during the three great revolutions in Western religious history—around the

time of the birth of Christ, during the Renaissance and Reformation period, and at the close of the last century (right up to the present). However, Hermes Trismegistus is no longer looked on as an ancient harbinger of any one particular faith. The Hermetic Tradition of today, above all else, extols the Gnostic idea that direct personal revelation and experience are essential to spiritual growth.

Thrice-Great Hermes' principal contribution was to teach human beings about our own spiritual nature and our place within the divine universe. Our true mission is to realize that we are each slivers of the divine spirit within physical bodies. We are the vehicles through which the deity experiences the created world of matter. We are to become more than human, to permit the divine spirit within us to see and experience the physical world in the best manner possible, by being true to our inner divine nature—without guilt, without perversion or obsession, and without harm to others. And, above all, we must actively try to return to the godhead. This is the goal of the Great Work: it is the "search for the Quintessence, the Stone of the Philosophers. True Wisdom. Perfect Happiness, the *Summum Bonum*."¹⁴

14. Regardie, *The Golden Dawn* (6th ed., St Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), 133.

CHAPTER TWO



A Brief History of the Golden Dawn

No one can claim to be knowledgeable about the Golden Dawn system without having an accurate understanding of the Order's rich history. Misinformation about the Golden Dawn abounds. If we are to consider the study of this system the equivalent of a college degree in magic, then it is vitally important that we have a candid account of the people and events that shaped it.

The history of the Golden Dawn, like that of any worthwhile human endeavor, is replete with high points and low points—with human achievements and human failings. There is no need for us to try to white-wash or sugarcoat the flaws of some of the individuals who contributed to the Order's colorful history. The truth would suffer as a result. Nor should we place them on lofty pedestals and worship them as if they were infallible gurus. They were not. Presenting the originators of the Golden Dawn in an exaggerated fashion would do them, as well as modern-day students, a grave disservice. We must learn from their successes as well as from their mistakes. As it states in one of the rituals, "Good alone is mighty, and truth alone shall prevail."¹ As magicians and spiritual seekers, we need not fear the unvarnished truth.

The value of studying the life and times of the Golden Dawn's founders and original members lies in their humanity, their aspiration, their seeking after answers to spiritual questions, their magical innovations, and in their sheer creative genius. The architects of the Golden

Dawn system were not demi-gods; rather, they were gifted, intelligent, creative individuals who came together to craft a unique system of magical teachings and initiatory rites, the value of which has proven itself over time, and the influence of which has been felt by everyone who has ever studied the Western Esoteric Tradition.

In spite of the shortcomings of some of its founding members, the accomplishments of the Golden Dawn have benefited many people, as is evidenced by just how much of the system has been borrowed by other magical groups. Teachings and rituals that were originally created by the Golden Dawn are now standard fare in many esoteric organizations. This is because the teachings themselves are valid and useful. And for those whose first love is the Golden Dawn tradition, there is no question about its value. When Golden Dawn magicians are able to come to terms with the mixed bag of the Order's history, they are less likely to fall into the trap of egotism, hero worship, squabbles over lineage, and cultist tactics of control and manipulation—the scourges of esoteric Orders and religions alike. Instead, they are more likely to concentrate on what is *really* important in the Order: spiritual growth, the quest for Light, the Great Work.

From its inception, the Golden Dawn never envisioned itself as an organization for large numbers of people. As a secret society, all aspects of the Order, from its teachings and ceremonies to the identities of its members, were meant to be kept private from those who were not initiated into it. The purpose of the Order, simply put, was to furnish a select number of candidates with the teachings of the Western Esoteric Tradition, offer a complete course of magical training in the theurgic arts, and to equip them with the necessary tools for spiritual growth and illumination. In this regard, the Golden Dawn was not unique—there were other groups espousing the same goals, both then and now. In comparison with later groups, such as Paul Foster Case's Builders of the Adytum (B. O. T. A.),² the membership of the original Golden Dawn was small.

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1. From the Portal Ceremony. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), 218.
 2. B. O. T. A., 5105 North Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90042. B. O. T. A. also has a website at www.bota.org.

However, no other group, then or now, has had such an enormous impact on virtually every facet of Western occultism and magical practice. And yet this impact might not have been felt, and the modern renaissance of Hermetic magic might not have taken place way the it has, had not the rituals and curriculum of the Golden Dawn been made available to a wider audience through Israel Regardie's publication of *The Golden Dawn*.³

In addition, the publication of the Golden Dawn's administrative papers, ordinances, bylaws, and Order-related letters written by prominent Golden Dawn historians such as Ellic Howe (*The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*) and R. A. Gilbert (*The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians*, *The Golden Dawn Companion*, and *The Golden Dawn Scrapbook*) have shed a great deal of light on the personalities, thoughts, motives, conflicts, and aspirations of the founding members of the original Order. Through their unparalleled access to private collections, these authors have provided us with a rich understanding of those men and women who first established the Golden Dawn as the premier magical fraternity of the West.

The Years Before the Golden Dawn

The political structure and intellectual bulwark of the Catholic Church, invincible in medieval times, could not deflect the blows made against it by the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. The Age of Enlightenment, an intellectual movement of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe, was a reaction against the religious insanity of the preceding centuries. Its roots can be traced back to the humanism of the Renaissance, which promoted academic interest in classical texts and values. Enlightenment thought was epitomized by the celebration of reason, the faculty by which human beings comprehend the cosmos and advance their own existence. Knowledge, freedom, and happiness were considered to be the goals of a rational or thinking human being.

3. With the publication of this book, much of the Golden Dawn's curriculum from Neophyte to Zelator Adeptus Minor was made accessible to a wide audience of spiritual seekers.

Eventually even religion itself become subject to the scrutiny of reason in England and France. The result was deism, a rational if unorganized religion with very few tenets that were thought to be manifest to all rational beings: mainly, the existence of one God, often perceived as the Architect of the Universe, who takes no interest in the world, assumes no control over the life of humans, and exerts no influence on natural phenomena.

The Enlightenment affected religion in other, unexpected ways as well. For example, biblical literalism, the mainstay of Fundamentalist Christianity, developed as a result of the so-called Age of Reason, wherein the symbolic and allegorical wisdom of the Bible was discounted as the idea of "the Bible as historical fact" won out over the idea of "the Bible as a supernatural textbook of Mystery teachings."⁴

Ironically, the extreme rationalism of the eighteenth century was countered by renewed interest in Freemasonry, mysticism, and secret societies. There were also a number of attempts to re-create a viable version of the initiatory rites of the ancient mystery religions. Among these were Qabalah-inspired Orders such as French-born Martines de Pasqually's Rite of Elected Cohens, instituted in 1754; the Martinist Order of Louis Claude de St. Martin (1743–1803); and the quasi-Masonic Orders such as the Egyptian Rite of Freemasonry created by Count Allesandro Cagliostro (1743–1795).

Eventually the Enlightenment fell victim to its own cold and dispassionate excesses, although its optimism in the general progress of the human race survived. The reaction against "blind reason" came in the form of Romanticism, a cultural movement of the late eighteenth century. Romanticism was characterized by emphasis on the individual's expression of emotion and imagination, and a renewed interest in nature, the subjective, the personal, the spontaneous, the visionary, and the transcendental. Magic, ancient religions, and metaphysical topics were again drawing attention.

4. See David Dungan's book *A History of the Synoptic Problem: The Canon, the Text, the Composition, and the Interpretation of the Gospels* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 284–286.

The time was ripe for visionaries such as Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), a Swedish scientist, philosopher, and Christian mystic, who claimed to be able to access higher planes of being and communicate with spirits and angels. He also claimed to be in touch with spirits of the dead, including saints, kings, popes, and biblical personalities. Swedenborg devoted much time and energy to interpreting the Bible and describing what he had seen and experienced in the spirit realms.

New methods of healing were also being tested. German physician Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) developed the theory of animal magnetism, which posited that a subtle, universal “fluid” exists in all bodies. This invisible fluid acted according to the laws of magnetism and could be manipulated by using magnetized objects to cure illnesses. Mesmer’s system of therapeutics, called mesmerism, was the predecessor of the modern practice of hypnotism.

By the mid-1800s, Europe was experiencing a huge growth of interest in occultism in general, and the Hermetic Tradition in particular. This interest was seen in England and especially in France. By the mid-1850s, the French occult revival was well underway. The movement was spearheaded by individuals such as former Catholic clergyman and prolific author Alphonse Louis Constant, better known as Eliphas Levi (1810–1875). Levi was an astute Qabalist who was knowledgeable in the occult sciences. In 1854 he wrote *The Dogma and Ritual of High Magic*, which would become a cornerstone of the Western Magical Tradition. Levi was the first person to point out the correlation between the twenty-two cards of the Major Arcana of the tarot and the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet⁵—a theory that would later become an important part of the Golden Dawn’s teachings.⁶ Levi’s writings on the Qabalah, the creation of talismans, and the idea of the Astral Light was largely embraced by the founders of the Golden Dawn.

5. Levi’s system of tarot correspondences was followed by Paul Christian, Gerard Encausse (“Papus”), and Oswald Wirth.

6. In 1861, Levi is said to have met with an Englishman by the name of Kenneth McKenzie, a member of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (S. R. I. A.). McKenzie had a pivotal role in the creation of the Golden Dawn’s Cipher Manuscripts, which drew upon the tarot and other esoteric teachings.

Another individual who had a significant influence on the occult revival of the nineteenth century was Frederick Hockley (1808–1885), a Spiritualist, Freemason, and Rosicrucian whose experiments with spirit communications and clairvoyance using the methods of crystal gazing and magic mirrors were carried out and recorded over a sixty-year span. This “Rosicrucian seer” transcribed many unpublished works on Qabalah, alchemy, and magic. His own skrying experiences were scrupulously recorded in some thirty volumes of journals. Hockley’s companions in the Rosicrucian Society in England,⁷ particularly those more occult-minded members, would no doubt have had access to his work.

This was a time of discovery as England continued to explore the farthest reaches of the world. There was a great deal of curiosity about the archaic traditions of the Celts and the mysticism of the Far East. There was also much interest in ancient Egypt, fueled in no small part by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, curator for the British Museum’s Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities. In 1883 Budge began work for the museum and, through the 1880s, he was able to secure numerous valuable manuscripts, cuneiform tablets, and Egyptian papyri for the British museum, including a remarkably well-preserved version of the *Book of the Dead*.⁸

Most occult studies at the time were strictly theoretical. But there was definitely a change in the air with regard to spiritual beliefs. Many people were dissatisfied with the status quo of the orthodox religions. They were hungry for something new and stimulating. The Spiritualist movement evolved to satiate this hunger.

Spiritualism was established as an alternative form of religious belief in America in the late 1840s. It was founded in 1848 by the Fox sisters (Margaretta, Leah, and Kate), the daughters of a Methodist farmer. The family was beset with all manner of inexplicable rappings and banging noises in the night. Eventually one of the sisters began to communicate with the ghostly rapper through a simple code and learned of the apparition.

7. Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia.

8. Many of the important discoveries of ancient Egypt were pilfered, much to the angst of the Egyptians. There is interesting account of Budge’s exploits in Leo Deuel’s book *Testaments of Time: The Search for Lost Manuscripts and Records* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 113–131.

tion's untimely death. Shortly thereafter the Fox sisters began to perform public demonstrations of their ability to converse with the departed.

Spiritualism had itself been influenced by the earlier experiences of Emanuel Swedenborg, who also claimed to communicate with the dead. It was also influenced by the work of Anton Mesmer and his followers, who discovered the condition known as the hypnotic trance or somnambulistic state, which seemed to parallel the trance state of Spiritualist mediums.

The focus of Spiritualism was on communication with the dead. A deceased person, who first had to prove his or her identity by giving accurate information about their lives, was said to speak through a medium in order to give information to the living. This was sometimes accompanied by certain physical manifestations such as rapping on table, levitation, psychometry,⁹ the moving of objects around the medium, spirit writings, and the materialization of the deceased spirit.

Spiritualism caused great excitement and attracted many followers when it came into being, because it provided direct and personal experience with the spiritual. By 1860, Spiritualism was well established in Great Britain. By 1875 there were millions of people said to have been involved in the Spiritualist movement.¹⁰ It was dynamic and exhilarating, especially when compared to the tamer routines of the orthodox churches. However, the limitations of Spiritualism were many. It seemed to offer contact with only the lowest levels of the spiritual world—the shells and spirits of the dead. (Magicians have a saying about Spiritualism—“Just because someone has died doesn't mean they've gotten any wiser.”) Spiritualism was intellectually unsophisticated, and had no tradition to back it up. There was also a danger in the excessive suggestibility of the medium and the complete negation of his or her will during the trance state. In addition, there were a disturbing number of mediums that were frauds.

9. The ability to divine information about people or events associated with an object touching by touching it.

10. Blavatsky, H. P., compiled by Lina Psaltis, *Dynamics of the Psychic World* (Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, 1967), 32.

In the 1860s and 1870s, there was an increased interest in Freemasonry, a worldwide fraternity of men supposedly founded at the building of King Solomon's Temple.¹¹ Freemasonry taught basic morality and principled development through symbols. Admission into Freemasonry required a belief in God as the Divine Architect of the cosmos. Initiation into the various degrees of Masonry involved an elaborate system of symbolic ritual. Masonic rites included secret passwords, signs, knocks, and grips or handshakes (all of which would directly influence the structure of the Golden Dawn's initiation ceremonies).¹² Because of an influx of men who wished to become Masons, many new lodges were formed during the later part of the 1800s.

In 1875, an organization known as the Theosophical Society was founded in New York City by a group of Spiritualists, Qabalists, Freemasons, and Rosicrucians. It was headed by Madame Helena Petrova Blavatsky and Colonel Henry Olcott. The Russian-born Blavatsky (HPB) was described as a flamboyant, outrageous, and attractive personality, and one of the most influential figures of the nineteenth-century occult revival.

Theosophy means "divine wisdom"—from *theos*, "god," and *sophia*, "wisdom." The objective of the Theosophical Society was to establish the idea of a universal brotherhood of humanity, "a concept rooted in the fact of nature that from atom to star, to man to angel, all are of one divine origin."¹³ The Society stressed the existence of a secret doctrine or esoteric teaching that, for untold ages, had been in the possession of certain exalted adepts who inhabited higher planes of existence. Blavatsky claimed to be in direct communication with these incorporeal spiritual teachers.

Many educated people in America and in Britain welcomed Theosophy because it offered a vital and stimulating alternative to the stuffy,

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11. Although Masonic tradition states that the fraternity is ancient, there is little hard evidence of its existence before 1390 C.E., the date of the Regis Manuscript Old Charges. Grand Lodge Freemasonry did not exist until 1717. Hamill, John. *The History of English Freemasonry* (England: Lewis Masonic Books, 1994), 34, 44–45, 181.
 12. Even the phrase "So mote it be" entered the vernacular of the Golden Dawn from Freemasonry.
 13. Blavatsky, 33.

Victorian religion of the masses. It also offered an alternative to material science, which was busy destroying all spiritual and supernatural ideas of the universe. Theosophy was intellectually satisfying to people who were looking for a new kind of spirituality. Instead of dead relatives, the Theosophists sought the advice of enlightened Masters—higher spiritual beings. Theosophy also made an intriguing claim to represent an archaic secret tradition. Its aim was to bring the esoteric knowledge of the ancients to the modern world, and to promote the study of comparative religions, the laws of nature, and humanity's spiritual faculties. In addition to supporting the idea of brotherly love, Theosophists also popularized the idea of an esoteric wisdom-teaching that was common to all humanity throughout the ages.

It is interesting to note that there was not a single representative of the Eastern Mystical Tradition among the founders of the Theosophical Society. At this early stage, Madame Blavatsky identified her inner contacts or Secret Chiefs as nonphysical masters from an Egyptian Order that was carrying on the work of Zoroaster and Solomon. In other words, the Theosophical Society was founded as a Western esoteric society. Blavatsky's Western Masters were called Serapis Bey, Polydorus Isurenus, and John King.

It was years later that Blavatsky and Olcott converted to Buddhism. The Theosophical Society then shifted to an Eastern orientation. Blavatsky gave up her Western Secret Chiefs for three Oriental Masters: Koot Hoomi, Morya, and Djwal Khul. If HBP and Olcott had not become Buddhists and changed the focus of the Theosophical Society, it is possible that the Golden Dawn might never have developed. But since Theosophy now looked to the East for spiritual wisdom, there was still a need for an organization that emphasized the Western Esoteric Tradition.¹⁴

14. Aware of the existence of the Golden Dawn, in 1889 Blavatsky created a new body, the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society, in an attempt to stem the loss of practical occultists from the Theosophical Society to the Golden Dawn, and to prevent a total split between the proponents of Eastern and Western spirituality.



Figure 5: Clockwise from top left: Eliphas Levi, Madame Blavatsky, Anna Kingsford, and Dr. W. Wynn Westcott

Another important figure that influenced the creation of the Golden Dawn was Anna Kingsford. Along with her spiritual partner, Edward Maitland, Mrs. Kingsford revived the idea of an esoteric Christianity. Both Kingsford and Maitland were mystics who were said to have frequent spiritual visions. They called their work Christian Pantheism, which explored the Bible in terms of esoteric symbolism, Qabalah, and the mythologies of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Their doctrine had similarities to certain Neoplatonic, Gnostic, and alchemical ideas.

In the early 1880s, Kingsford and Maitland were members of the Theosophical Society, and by 1884 they headed the London Theosophical Lodge. However, they resigned when they realized that the Eastern focus of the society could never truly be reconciled with their own Western beliefs. The Qabalistic ideas of Eliphas Levi were much more to their liking.

In 1885, Kingsford and Maitland formed the Hermetic Society for the express purpose of promoting Western esoteric philosophy. The Hermetic Society attracted people like Samuel Liddell Mathers and Dr. W. Wynn Westcott, who presented lectures to the members of the Society. There is no doubt that Anna Kingsford impressed both Mathers and Westcott with the idea that men and women should work together on the spiritual quest, as did the Theosophical Society. According to R. A. Gilbert, these two prominent members of the Hermetic Society:

... followed its Western path while retaining those features of the parent Theosophical Society that they found of value. As Freemasons they recognized the value of the form of Obligation that bound members to secrecy concerning certain teachings and promised "never to divulge certain signs and passwords used by members of the Society for mutual recognition." As Rosicrucians they recognized the value of superhuman hidden masters, whose existence—real or imaginary—could be extremely useful to the leaders of an Order, whether one chose to call them Mahatmas or Secret Chiefs. As men they recognized that the time was ripe for something more splendid than Theosophy. The Golden Dawn was about to be born.¹⁵

15. R. A. Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians* (Great Britain, The Aquarian Press, 1983), 23.

The Founders of the Golden Dawn

In 1888, three Qabalists, Freemasons, and Rosicrucians founded the Esoteric Order of the Golden Dawn to carry out the work that was abandoned by the Theosophical Society. The creators of the Golden Dawn intended that the Order should serve as the guardian of the Western Esoteric Tradition by keeping its knowledge intact, while at the same time preparing and teaching those individuals called to the initiatory path of the mysteries.

The primary founder of the Golden Dawn was Dr. William Wynn Westcott. A London coroner and physician who was interested in occultism, Westcott was a Master Mason and Secretary General of the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* or the Rosicrucian Society in England (also called the S. R. I. A. or Soc. Ros.). Westcott was interested in the many varieties of Masonry that thrived outside the conventional craft. He was actively involved in most of the esoteric Orders that abounded in Britain at the time. However, many of these groups were theoretical study societies that were not concerned with practical work. Westcott longed for something more—a group that would not only study and research the esoteric knowledge of the West, but would also put this knowledge to practical, magical use.

From all accounts, Westcott was a gentle, friendly man. Within his sphere of influence he was well liked and solidly respected. In esoteric circles Westcott was widely esteemed for his expertise on the Qabalah, alchemy, and Hermetic philosophy. He published an impressive volume of work, in both the Hermetic and medical fields. Many famous esoteric texts were translated by this untiring occultist, including the famous Qabalistic text *Sepher Yetzirah* (1887), and Eliphas Levi's treatise on the tarot, *The Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum* (1896). Westcott edited a series of Hermetic and Gnostic texts and published them as individual volumes of his *Collectanea Hermetica* series.¹⁶ He also printed a series of papers for the S. R. I. A., including "Numbers: Their Occult Power and Mystic Virtue"; "An Introduction to the Study of the Kabbalah"; and "The Rosicrucians: Past and Present, At Home and Abroad."

16. The *Collectanea Hermetica* was used to supplement the teachings of the Golden Dawn.

In 1888, Westcott, aided by Samuel Liddell Mathers and Dr. William Robert Woodman, founded the Esoteric Order of the Golden Dawn. However, the Golden Dawn was definitely Westcott's brainchild. According to Ellic Howe: "Although Westcott intended that they should be 'co-equal' . . . it was he who ran the G. D. during its early years. It was his hobby, his child and largely his creation."¹⁷

. . . (I)t was Westcott, not Mathers, who found the cipher mss, just as it was Westcott who saw what could be built upon them and transformed his vision into reality by creating the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and inventing an appropriate "Apostolic succession" in order to ensure its respectability. . . . It is also clear from the notebook that Westcott's esoteric knowledge was at least as deep as Mathers's—a question never at issue at the time but often subtly posed in more recent years, to the detriment of Westcott, by protagonists of Mathers. What can also be shown is that Mathers himself never doubted that in this field Westcott was his equal.¹⁸

Westcott's other colleague in this endeavor was Dr. William Robert Woodman, a retired physician and horticulturalist. Woodman was a well-known and admired Freemason, and a leading member of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia. He served as co-editor for the society's journal, *The Rosicrucian*. When Robert Wentworth Little, the founder of the Soc. Ros., died in April 1878, Woodman became Supreme Magus of the society and took over *The Rosicrucian* as well. Under Woodman's rule, the S. R. I. A. expanded from London to the rest of England and was exporting its influence to Australia and America, gaining rapid acceptance as the world's premier Rosicrucian Society. Woodman was credited with adding a strong Qabalistic emphasis to the studies of the Soc. Ros.

Along with Mathers, Woodman was asked by Westcott to become one of the leaders of his new Order in 1887. Woodman was an excellent

17. Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn* (New York, Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1972), 34.

18. "From Cipher to Enigma: The Role of William Wynn Westcott in the Creation of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn." Published in Carroll "Poke" Runyon's *Secrets of the Golden Dawn Cypher Manuscript* (Siverado, CA: C.H.S. Publications, 1997), 209–211.

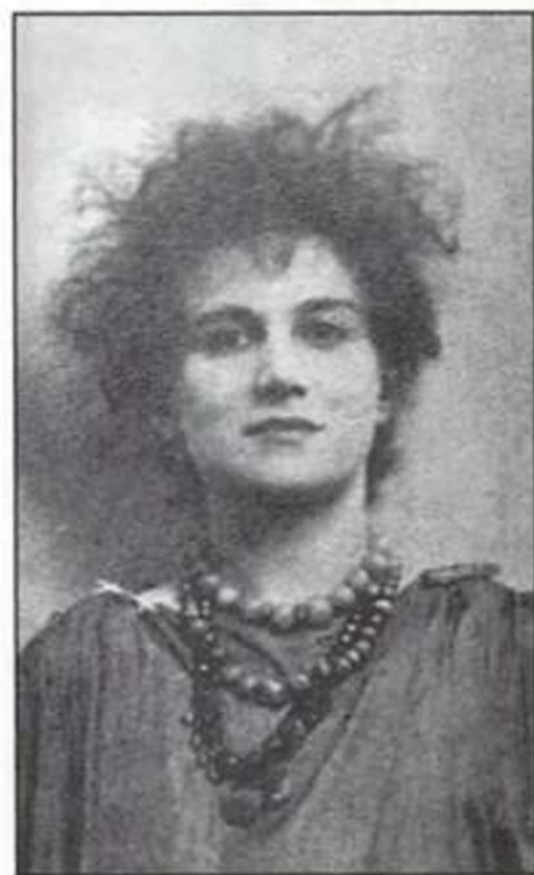


Figure 6: Clockwise from top left: S. L. MacGregor Mathers, Dr. W. R. Woodman, Moina Mathers, and Florence Farr

Qabalist who no doubt had a leading role in developing in the Qabalistic studies of the Golden Dawn. However, he died in 1891 before the Order was fully developed.

Of the three founding members of the Golden Dawn, the true magician of the Order was Samuel Liddell "MacGregor"¹⁹ Mathers. Like the others, he was a high-ranking Freemason and a member of the S. R. I. A.'s High Council. To the Society's Transactions he contributed essays on "The Deity in Hebrew Letters," "Rosicrucian Symbols," and "Rosicrucian Ancients and Their Zodiacal Emblems." Among the three founders, Mathers has been simultaneously the most vilified and the most deified. Both views are off the mark, for Mathers was neither a villain nor a superhuman god. He was, however, one of the more colorful characters in the history of the Golden Dawn, displaying many of the assets and liabilities often associated with those who possess magical genius and great creativity.

A former amateur boxer, Mathers was said to be an attractive man—slender and tall and scarred from a fencing duel. He fascinated nearly every person he met, and seemed to elicit a full and varied spectrum of descriptions from those who knew him:

Mathers' friends and enemies alike admitted the extent of his learning, even if they did not admire it. A. E. Waite described him as a "comic Blaskstone of occult lore" and recalled him pursuing his occult quests in the British Museum, all day and every day, absorbing knowledge rather than sifting it, for Waite looked upon Mathers as having "an utterly uncritical mind." A similar judgment was made by W. B. Yeats, who said of Mathers that he had "much learning, but little scholarship, much imagination and imperfect taste." Against this J. W. Brodie-Innes spoke of "his wonderful learning in strange bypaths of knowledge" and said: "Of his scholarship it is not for me to speak, so far was it beyond my own," and Brodie-Innes was a scholar.²⁰

Mathers' published works included *The Tarot: Its Occult Significance, Use in Fortune Telling, and Method of Play* (1888), an examination of the

19. Mathers' claim to a Highland ancestry were fictitious. Gilbert, R. A. *The Golden Dawn Scrapbook* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1997), 112.

20. Gilbert, 29–30.

Marseilles deck. He is also known for his translations of a series of grimoires including *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, *The Key of Solomon the King*, and *The Grimoire of Armadel*. In addition, Mathers translated Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata* from Latin to English in his own version, *The Kabbalah Unveiled*.

Mathers was a gifted ritualist, and despite the fact that he often lived in poverty, he produced some of the finest teachings in the Western Esoteric Tradition. However, he was also capable of being an eccentric tyrant. As a practical magician, Mathers had few equals. Of the three founding Chiefs it was Mathers, the primary Chief of the Inner Order, who made the Golden Dawn into a truly magical initiatory Order, lifting it miles above the occult study societies of the time.

The Cipher Manuscript

No history of the Golden Dawn can be given without some reference to the Cipher Manuscript—the enigmatic document upon which the rituals and knowledge lectures of the Golden Dawn are based. According to Westcott, in 1887 the Reverend A. F. A. Woodford gave him some sixty pages of a manuscript written in cipher. Woodford was an elderly Mason who, it was claimed, received the manuscript from “a dealer in curios.” The manuscript, which seemed to be old, was quickly deciphered by Westcott using the cipher found in Abbot Johann Trithemius’ book *Polygraphiae*. It proved to be a series of ritual outlines of an occult Order. Westcott fleshed out the outlines into full working rituals.²¹ Shortly after the grade rituals from Neophyte through Philosophus were completed, Westcott asked Mathers and Woodman to join him as Chiefs of his new Order.

There continue to be many questions about where the Cipher Manuscript came from. Some people tend to think that Westcott created them.

21. Most believe that Mathers was responsible for writing the Golden Dawn's initiation ceremonies; however, R. A. Gilbert suggests that it was Westcott, not Mathers, who developed the rituals from the Cipher Manuscript. See R. A. Gilbert's article “From Cipher to Enigma: The Role of William Wynn Westcott in the Creation of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn” from Runyon's *Secrets of the Golden Dawn Cypher Manuscript*.

Others think that they were written by Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton, the author of an occult novel called *Zanoni, A Strange Story*, or by Frederick Hockley, the famous Rosicrucian "seer" and transcriber of occult manuscripts. There have been several other theories put forth as possible sources of the Cipher Manuscript, including a Jewish Masonic Lodge in Frankfort called the *Loge zur aufgehenden Morgenröthe*, "the Lodge of Dawning Light" or the "Lodge of Approaching Morning Light" (with an offshoot Lodge supposedly founded in London), and a "Qabalistic College" in London headed by an influential Qabalist by the name of Johann Friedrich Falk. Both of these groups have been suspected by some to have been tied to the enigmatic second Hermanoubis Temple of the Golden Dawn. However, there is no evidence to support any of these theories. In fact, the Frankfort Morgenröthe Lodge, which many modern occultists believe to have closed in 1850, is still in existence.²²

The real truth about the Cipher Manuscript is probably as follows: It now seems certain that the Cipher Manuscript was written by Kenneth Mackenzie, the author of *The Royal Masonic Encyclopedia* and a leading member of the S. R. I. A. Mackenzie had known Eliphas Levi and was a friend of Frederick Holland, another high-grade Mason. Leading Golden Dawn historian R. A. Gilbert suspects that the real Hermanoubis Temple was a Golden Dawn prototype founded in 1883 by Holland.²³ This group was known as the "Society of Eight." Mackenzie wrote the ritual outlines of the Cipher Manuscript for Holland's order, a group that never fully manifested, or perhaps for the Sat B'hai, an Order that admitted both men and women. Westcott acquired the papers after Mackenzie's death.

22. According to R. A. Gilbert, the Morgenröthe Lodge still exists. The history of the Lodge has been written (in German) and is available. Thus, it is possible to determine what the Lodge's activities have included since its inception in 1807 up to the present day. And one of the things that is not included in the lodge's minutes book is any possible connection to the founding of the Golden Dawn in England.

23. See R. A. Gilbert's article "From Cipher to Enigma: The Role of William Wynn Westcott in the Creation of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn" from Runyon's *Secrets of the Golden Dawn Cypher Manuscript*. According to Gilbert, Kenneth Mackenzie, John Yarker, and Francis Irwin were all members of the "Society of Eight."

With such a strong Masonic background, Westcott was familiar with the notion of organization through hierarchy. Masonic lodges could not exist without a legitimate charter from the Grand Lodge. Thus Westcott must have felt the need to provide evidence that the Golden Dawn was not something merely created out of thin air—that it had a written history to back it up. He needed a “pedigree” of a sort to prove that the G. D. had legitimate hierarchical succession from some distant authority. Since no such hierarchical authority existed for the Golden Dawn, Westcott fabricated one. Why did he do this? It was probably the only way he could attract Freemasons, Rosicrucians, and other serious occultists to his new Order.

An additional paper, written in cipher, was inserted into the manuscript by someone—more than likely Westcott himself. This was a letter containing the credentials and address of a woman in Germany named Fraulein Sprengel (later called Anna Sprengel) who went by the magical motto of Soror *Sapiens Dominabitur Astris*, meaning “the wise person shall be ruled by the stars.” According to Westcott, he wrote to Fraulein Sprengel and was informed that she was an Adept of an occult Order—Die Goldene Dämmerung or the Golden Dawn. Through a series of letters she supposedly authorized Westcott to establish a new temple in England and gave Westcott permission to sign her name on any document that was needed. In the spring of 1888, Westcott produced a Charter of Warrant for the Isis-Urania Temple No. 3 of the Order of the Golden Dawn in London.²⁴

While the Cipher Manuscript is genuine, it is certain that Westcott made up the story about Fraulein Sprengel and her letters. R. A. Gilbert has pointed out that *Sapiens Dominabitur Astris* was the magical motto of none other than Anna Kingsford, the founder of the Hermetic Society, who was probably the unsuspecting model for Westcott’s fictitious

24. The Soror SDA’s fictitious temple in Germany was known as Licht, Liebe, und Leben (temple No. 1 in Westcott’s order of succession). The second temple was supposedly called Hermanubis in London. According to Westcott’s fanciful history, this temple was chartered to two Englishmen, but never really got off the ground.

Fraulein. Kingsford died in 1888. By making Fraulein Sprengel a high-ranking official in an obscure German Order, Westcott made her authoritative, credible, and unreachable. And once the mythical Soror S. D. A. had served her purpose, she conveniently died.

By the end of 1888, the Isis-Urania Temple in London had thirty-two members: nine women and twenty-three men. That same year two more temples were established. These were the Osiris Temple No. 4 at Weston-super-Mare and the Horus Temple No. 5 at Bradford. Amen-Ra Temple No. 6 in Edinburgh, Scotland, was not founded until 1893. The Osiris Temple was active until 1895, but the Horus Temple at Bradford prospered until 1900–1902 when it began to pull away from G. D. teachings to adopt a more Masonic and Soc. Ros. focus.

Some Prominent Golden Dawn Personalities

Who were the magicians that comprised this magical fraternity? The members of the Order of the Golden Dawn were almost all respectable middle-class men and women who were interested in the occult. Some were from the upper class, and there were quite a few doctors and writers. Many members of the Order also belonged to other esoteric groups, such as the Theosophical Society. Many were Masons. Several members of the Golden Dawn wrote a number of books on a variety of subjects, from many aspects of occultism to poetry, fiction, biography, medicine, and entomology. They were intelligent, creative, and otherwise normal people who had a great thirst for spiritual knowledge. They sought to understand the hidden mechanics of the universe through the study of magic. In short, they were not unlike today's practitioners of Golden Dawn magic. Some of the more notable members were as follows:

Moina Mathers

Samuel Mather's companion was born as Mina Bergson in Geneva, Switzerland, to Orthodox Jewish parents. She studied to become an artist at the Slade School of Art in London. Her brother, Henri Bergson, was a famous Nobel Prize-winning French philosopher. Mina met Samuel Liddell Mathers in 1887, married him in 1890, and changed her name to the

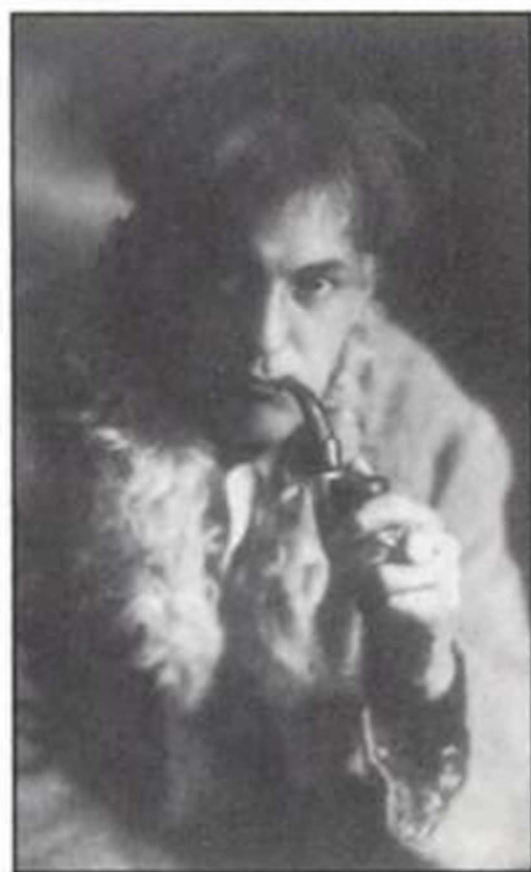
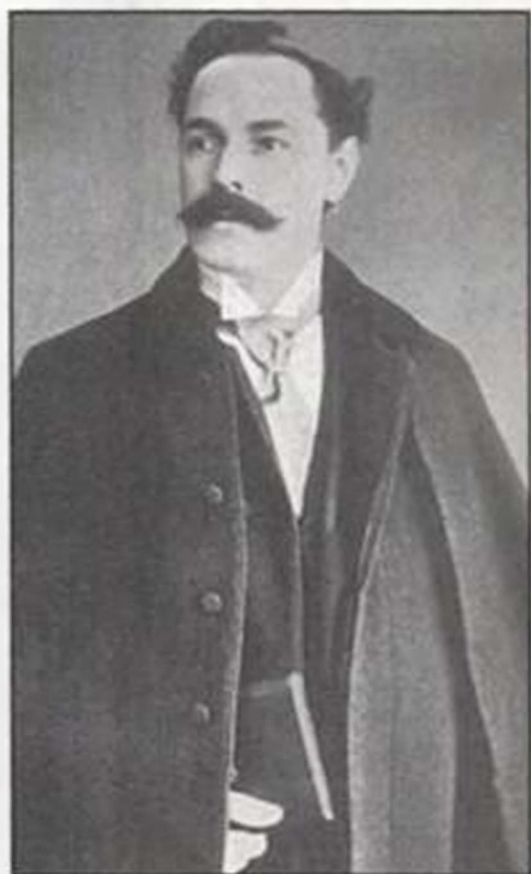


Figure 7: Clockwise from top left: William Butler Yeats, A. E. Waite, Aleister Crowley, and Dion Fortune (with Thomas Penry Evans on left)

more Celtic "Moina." In 1888 she was the first person to be initiated by the three Chiefs into the Isis-Urania temple of the newly formed Order of the Golden Dawn. Moina was an accomplished artist, a gifted clairvoyant, and pioneer in the art form of collage. Her paintings of Egyptian deities, wall decorations, and other artwork served to adorn the Isis-Urania temple and embellish the Order's teachings. Throughout her life she remained thoroughly dedicated to Mathers.

William Butler Yeats

Yeats was a leading force in the Irish literary renaissance and one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Yeats was passionately interested in occult and mystical subjects—he helped found the Hermetic Society in Dublin and was a member of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society.²⁵ Initiated into the Neophyte grade in 1890, Yeats' association with the Golden Dawn and one of its derivatives lasted for more than twenty years. An ardent supporter of the practice of magic, Yeats reaffirmed that next to his poetry, the Golden Dawn was the most important pursuit of his life: "If I had not made magic my constant study I could not have written a single word of my Blake book, nor would the Countess Kathleen have ever come to exist. The mystical life is the center of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write."²⁶

Florence Farr

Mrs. Florence Emery (as she was known in the Golden Dawn until her divorce in 1894) was initiated into the Isis-Urania temple in 1890. Farr was a famous actress of the British stage. Described as strikingly beautiful, she played leading roles in theatrical works by George Bernard Shaw and William Butler Yeats, both of whom vied for her affection. Her experience with dramatics and staging, combined with her melodious speaking voice, made her a natural and gifted ritualist. Farr taught weekly

25. See note 14.

26. Yeats, *Letters*, quoted in Graf, W. B. *Yeats—Twentieth Century Magus* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 2000), 13.

classes in tarot and Enochian magic, and wrote several books on esoteric subjects.

It is not our purpose to give a complete biography of the early magicians of the Golden Dawn in this brief overview. However, some notable members need to be mentioned:

- **Annie Horniman:** Built and funded Ireland's famous Abbey Theater, and was considered a driving force behind the Irish literary revival.
- **Rev. William Alexander Ayton:** A clergyman (the Vicar of Chacombe in Oxfordshire) and a practicing alchemist.
- **William Horton:** A prominent graphic artist in the Art Nouveau movement.
- **Arthur Edward Waite:** Christian mystic, scholar, occultist, and prolific author of several books on Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, Qabalah, and other esoteric subjects.
- **Dr. Edward Berridge:** Renowned homeopathic doctor who advocated the sexual philosophy and Utopian values of Thomas Lake Harris.
- **William Peck:** The city astronomer of Edinburgh, Scotland.
- **Maud Gonne:** Irish activist and one of the founders of Sinn Féin. Gonne was a noted actress on the Irish stage.²⁷
- **Arthur Machen:** Author of occult novels and short stories, Machen was considered a forerunner of twentieth-century Gothic science fiction.

27. At the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, Gonne played the heroine of W. B. Yeats' first play, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1892), a role that was modeled after her. Yeats fell in love with Gonne, but she refused Yeats' many marriage proposals. In 1903 she married a fellow Irish activist, Major John MacBride. Her son, Sean MacBride, became foreign minister of Ireland and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1974.

- **Algernon Blackwood:** Author of tales of mystery, ghost stories, and the supernatural.
- **Constance Wilde:** The wife of playwright Oscar Wilde.
- **Aleister Crowley:** Self-proclaimed “Prophet of the New Aeon” and “the One Anointed in Light, the single teacher for the human race.” After two years in the Golden Dawn, Crowley left to form a new occult Order based on his teachings of Thelema.
- **Dion Fortune:** Author of occult fiction and several important texts on magic, Fortune later founded her own occult group, the Society of the Inner Light.
- **Paul Foster Case:** Author of several books on tarot, Qabalah, and Rosicrucianism, Case formed his own group, the Builders of the Adytum (B. O. T. A.).



Figure 8: Left: Paul Foster Case, right: Israel Regardie

The R. R. et A. C.

During its early years from 1888 to 1891, the Golden Dawn was primarily a theoretical school that performed the initiation ceremonies of the Outer Order and taught its members the basics of Qabalah, astrology, alchemical symbolism, geomancy, and tarot. The Order taught no practical magic other than the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram. In the later part of 1891, the Isis-Urania Temple had over eighty Initiates, while other temples had a couple of dozen members.

Dr. Woodman died in December of 1891 and no one was chosen to take his place. Around this time, Mathers finished a magnificent ritual for the ⑤=⑥ (the Adeptus Minor grade), the first grade of the Second or Inner Order of the Ordo Roseae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis, also called the R. R. et A. C., or the "Order of the Rose of Ruby and the Cross of Gold." With the creation of a functional Second Order, Mathers accomplished a restructuring of the Order and became its primary Chief.

The ⑤=⑥ ritual was based upon the legend of Christian Rosenkreutz (or C. R. C.) and the accidental discovery of his burial chamber one hundred and twenty years after his death. The story, as described in the *Fama Fraternitatis*,²⁸ is as follows: The great spiritual teacher and founder of the Rosicrucian fraternity, Christian Rosenkreutz, died and was secretly buried. Years later, members of the Order chanced upon the tomb, which was hidden behind some masonry. The tomb they found was a seven-sided room inscribed with elaborate symbolism. Each wall of the tomb was eight feet high by five feet wide. In the center of the room was a circular altar over a sarcophagus, in which lay the perfectly preserved body of C. R. C.

For the ⑤=⑥ ritual, MacGregor and Moina Mathers created an elaborate full-size version of C. R. C.'s tomb, known as the Vault of the Adepti, which displayed the strong Rosicrucian element that was woven into the Golden Dawn's Inner Order. Moina was an accomplished artist, a gift-

28. One of three important texts that form the basis of the Rosicrucian tradition. It was published in Europe in 1614 by an unknown author (possibly Lutheran scholar Johann Valentin Andreae).

ed clairvoyant, and MacGregor's personal skryer. Her visionary experiences may have greatly influenced her husband in the writing of the Second Order rituals and gradework. Moina painted most of the wall decorations, godforms, and temple furnishings for the mother temple, Isis-Urania, in London. Since the *Fama* did not give many details on the symbolism of the room, the Matherses were able to draw upon their own formidable creativity to produce this impressive chamber.

Admission to the secret Second Order was gained by invitation as well as examination. And the work of the Second Order was also extensive. Whereas the First Order of the Golden Dawn was basically theoretical, the Second Order of the R. R. et A. C. was where magical theory was put into practice. Members were required to make and consecrate several magical implements. MacGregor Mathers also created a curriculum and a series of eight examinations that led up to the subgrade of Theoricus Adeptus Minor. Few members had the time or stamina to complete the gradework and all eight examinations. Those who did could rightly profess to have obtained a complete education in nearly every facet of Western Hermetic magic. It was comparable to a university degree in magic.

In the spring of 1892, the Matherses moved to Paris and set up the Ahathoor Temple No. 7. Dr. Westcott became the Chief of the Order in England. Through his correspondence with Mathers he received additional material for the ever-expanding Second Order curriculum. The Order continued to thrive from 1892 to 1896. Shortly after this a handful of American temples were chartered by the A. O.: Thmé Temple No. 8 in Chicago, 1897; Thoth-Hermes Temple No. 9 in New York, 1897; Ptah Temple No. 10 in Philadelphia, 1919; and Atoum Temple No. 20 in Los Angeles.²⁹

29. See Kuntz, *The Golden Dawn Source Book* (Edmonds, Wash.: Holmes Publishing Group, 1996), 174–175. According to R. A. Gilbert, the Chicago Temple may have gone by another name. Information on the American temples is spotty at best.

Problems

Trouble in the Order began 1895 when MacGregor Mathers' relationship with his financier, Annie Horniman, began to deteriorate. Horniman, a longtime member of the Order, was the daughter of an affluent tea importer. She was a close friend of Moina Mathers when the two attended art school together. After their move to Paris, Horniman financially supported the Matherses from England with a generous subsidy. In return, she expected Mathers to dedicate all of his time to the work of the Order. But instead he became increasingly distracted by Jacobite politics and other pursuits.

MacGregor Mathers was a talented magician, but also a demanding, eccentric, and autocratic Chief. In the spring of 1896, a disagreement erupted between Horniman and Mathers over the matter of his growing interest in Celtic politics taking time away from his Order responsibilities. In a letter to William Peck of the Amen-Ra temple in Edinburgh, Horniman wrote: "... he [Mathers] told me that he had leisure time for politics but none for the arrears of work at 62 [Oakley Square, the headquarters of the Second Order.]"³⁰ Incensed at the thought that she was financially supporting a political movement she did not approve of rather than the Order work that she expected of Mathers, Horniman resigned from the office of Sub-Praemonstrator of Isis-Urania temple. Mathers accused his benefactress of trying to weaken his authority and she in turn withdrew her financial support from him.

Increased restlessness on the part of the Second Order Adepts in London resulted in swift action from Mathers, who undoubtedly felt his authority slipping away. In the fall of 1896, he sent each of them a copy of a manifesto demanding complete obedience to him on everything related to the First and Second Orders. All the Adepts submitted to the demand. However, Mathers was still not satisfied with Horniman's compliance and in a discourteous letter he demanded additional pledges from her. Ironically, Mathers' bills still needed to be paid and Horniman was his main source of income. One week later, Moina wrote to her benefactress, ask-

30. Howe, 126.

ing for more money. When Horniman did not send any funds, Mathers promptly expelled her from the Order. This shocked many of the members and only added to their discontent and increasing apprehension of Mathers.

Another problem developed in March of 1897, when Westcott's association with the Golden Dawn became known to the authorities, or so the story goes.³¹ Westcott resigned from all offices of the First and Second Orders. Florence Farr, the famous stage actress, then became the head of the London branch of the Order. But without Westcott's enthusiastic supervision and propensity for orderly paperwork, the extensive grade-work and examination system of the Second Order in London began to break down.

A major crisis for the Golden Dawn occurred in February of 1900. Mathers was governing the Order from a distance, and he was becoming increasingly out of touch with the English temples. Florence Farr was growing tired of Mathers's personal quirks and domineering behavior. In a letter to him, she suggested that the Order should be dissolved. Mathers suspected that this was part of a scheme to bring back Westcott and replace him as head of the Order. Consequently, Mathers revealed to Farr that the letters from Fraulein Sprengel had been forged by Westcott.

This bombshell shook the trust of the London members to its foundations. Even more exasperating was the fact that Westcott declined to give any explanation or even defend himself against Mathers' accusations. To

31. The whole story about Westcott's Order papers being found in a London cab, possibly left there by Mathers, smells fishy. Many modern magicians have assumed that Westcott resigned because his affiliation with the Golden Dawn became known to the authorities (i.e., the Home Office, who employed Westcott as a coroner). However, this is highly improbable because Freemasonry and its offshoots, as well as quasi-Masonic activities, were accepted and even respected in the Victorian era. It is more likely that Mathers discovered the truth about origins of the Cipher manuscript, Faulein Sprengel, and the rest, and simply pressured Westcott into resigning by threatening to reveal the true story to the Adepts. It has been suggested that perhaps Mrs. Westcott didn't like her husband's Golden Dawn activities and was another possible source of pressure. It has also been suggested that the falling out between Westcott and Mathers had more to do with the Soc. Ros. than the Golden Dawn.

make matters worse, an individual named Aleister Crowley, who had been in the Order for approximately one year, became eligible for initiation into the Second Order in December 1899. Florence Farr, along with several of the London Adepts, saw Crowley as a questionable Initiate and rejected his initiation.

... by 1899, when Crowley had advanced to initiation to the Second Inner Order, Florence refused his entry because of his eccentricities and "moral depravities" [and she was not considered a prudish woman].³²

Crowley immediately went to Paris and was initiated into the Second Order by Mathers. This did not sit well at all with the London Adepts, who were infuriated with Mathers and refused to acknowledge Crowley's initiation. A full-blown rebellion was at hand. The Second Order members in London formed a committee to investigate the allegations of fraud regarding the Sprengel letters. In April of 1900, Mathers declared the Second Order committee annulled. He sent Crowley to London as his emissary in order to take possession of the Second Order's private rooms and implements. Crowley attempted to carry out his mission in a manner that was described by one member as "a theatrical farce."³³ But his plan was foiled by the diligence of William Butler Yeats and some of the other London Adepts, who promptly expelled both Mathers and Crowley.³⁴

In a letter to his friend Lady Gregory, Yeats related, "I have had a bad time of it lately. . . . last week he [Mathers] sent a mad person—whom we

32. Greer, Mary K., "Women of the Golden Dawn," published in *Gnosis* No. 21, Fall 1991. This article can be found online at <http://www.hermeticgoldendawn.org>.

33. Comment by A. E. Hunter (Howe, 225). "At about 11.30 Aleister Crowley arrived in Highland dress, a black mask over his face, and a plaid thrown over his head and shoulders, an enormous gold gilt cross on his breast, and a dagger at his side." W. B. Yeats described Mathers' envoy as "bitter and violent and absurd."—George Mills Harper, *Yeats' Golden Dawn* (Great Britain: The Aquarian Press, 1987), 29.

34. Crowley left the Order to form his own group, which borrowed the name of the Golden Dawn's Third Order, the *Argentum Astrum* or the A. A. He went on to join Theodor Reuss's *Ordo Templi Orientis* (or the Order of the Temple of the Orient), and later become the head of the British branch of that Order.

refused to initiate—to take possession of the rooms and papers of the Society.” He went on to cite Crowley’s motives as “vengeance for our refusal to initiate him” and the Order’s reasons for refusing to do so: “we did not think a mystical society was intended to be a reformatory.”³⁵

In the ensuing confusion, Yeats took control and became Emperor of Isis-Urania Temple. The committee attempted to restructure the Order along more democratic lines. The result was only more confusion. Meanwhile, Annie Horniman had been reinstated into the Order. But she found to her dismay that many of the rituals had been meddled with, and the examination system had been virtually abandoned. Even worse, some of the Adepts, including Florence Farr, had created a separate secret group without the consent of Yeats and some of the other Adepts. This group, called the “Sphere,” specialized in astral visualization and astral traveling. Because of these abuses, Horniman began to argue with nearly everyone in the Order. Yeats tried to maintain peace for a while but finally resigned from office in February of 1901.

Another blow to the Order was on the horizon. This problem was named Madame Horos. And in 1901, she was responsible for bringing unwanted publicity to the Golden Dawn. Madame Horos and her husband were a pair of charlatans and con artists who had somehow managed to convince MacGregor Mathers that Mrs. Horos was actually the real Anna Sprengel. Mathers was fooled for a while, but when he started to get suspicious, they stole some copies of the Golden Dawn’s rituals and fled to London.

Once in London, the Horos couple set up their own personal Order—The Order of Theocratic Unity—which, unknown to its members, featured fraud, extortion, and sex. Mr. Horos was eventually arrested for rape. When charged by the authorities, the Horos couple claimed to be the leaders of the Golden Dawn. The result was that many of the most arcane secrets of the Order were made public. The initiation rituals of the Golden Dawn were printed in the London newspapers and the Order was scandalized by the whole episode.

35. Harper, 29.

The original Order now began to split apart. Florence Farr resigned from the Golden Dawn, which changed its name to the Hermetic Society of the Morgenröthe. A small group of initiates gave their allegiance to Mathers and consequently formed the Order of the A. O., the Alpha et Omega. In 1903, a schism occurred within the Order, and the old Esoteric Order of the Golden Dawn was no more.

The remnant of the original Isis-Urania Temple was taken over by A. E. Waite. Many of the remaining Golden Dawn members went with Waite's group. However, Waite did not care for magic. Mysticism was more to his taste. In his new Order, the Independent and Rectified Rite, Waite reduced the emphasis on ritual magic in favor of the mystical path that he preferred.

The more magically inclined members of the original Order, including Dr. Robert William Felkin and John William Brodie-Innes, formed the Order of the Stella Matutina or "Morning Star." Florence Farr and William Butler Yeats were among those Initiates who joined them.³⁶ Felkin's main temple in London was called Amoun.

After 1915, there were some half-a-dozen offshoots of the original Golden Dawn, but only two were of real consequence. The first of these, Waite's Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, had separated itself completely from the old traditions of the Order . . . The spirit of the Order persisted rather in the Stella Matutina.³⁷

The Offshoot Orders

In addition the Paris temple, the supporters of MacGregor Mathers established A. O. temples in London (1900), Edinburgh (1912), and two more London temples (1913 and 1919). There was also a hybrid group known as the Cromlech Temple (1913), a joint effort created by the Edinburgh A. O. temple and some Anglican clergymen.

36. Yeats was a leading member of the Stella Matutina for twenty years.

37. R. A. Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn Scrapbook* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1997), 184.

The Ahathoor temple of the A. O. in Paris never had a very large membership—meetings often included no more than half a dozen members. The minutes books of the temple show that even while Mathers was still in charge, the integrity of the Paris temple began a downhill slide and group temple work suffered enormously. Things had gotten so bad that there were several instances when the Ahathoor Temple began simply granting initiations and advancements without even performing any ritual for it, and there were even occasions when Neophyte initiations were conferred to candidates “in absentia.”³⁸

After MacGregor Mather's death in 1918, Moina Mathers and Brodie-Innes took charge of the Alpha et Omega. Moina's handling of Order affairs apparently left much to be desired, for several quarrels soon broke out in the American temples as evidenced by a series of letters written by despondent members who complained to Mrs. Mathers: “The situation of the A[lpha et] O[mega] in America is a long sad story. . . . The heads in this country have hardly seen the ‘outside’ of any Second Order book.”³⁹ . . . The Order in America is disintegrating.”⁴⁰

Some individuals who were initiated into the A. O. would later establish new magical groups. Dion Fortune, a student of psychology, left the Order in 1922 to form the Fraternity of the Hidden Light in England. Paul Foster Case would later go on to create his own organization, the Builders of the Adytum. Many of the American members of the A. O. left the Order to join him.

Meanwhile, Dr. Felkin established the Smaragdum Thalasses⁴¹ Temple of the Stella Matutina in New Zealand in 1912. The New Zealand Order

38. The Ahathoor minutes books reveal several instances where candidates were simply “received by explanation” into the grades of Neophyte, Zelator, Theoricus, Practicus, and Philosophus. Presumably the high points of the ritual were simply explained rather than ceremonially performed.

39. Lilli Geise, in a letter to Moina Mathers dated 1921, printed in Darcy Kuntz's book, *The Golden Dawn American Source Book* (Edmonds, Wash.: Holmes Publishing Group, 2000), 20–21.

40. Elma Dame, in a letter to Moina Mathers dated 1922. *Ibid.*, 35.

41. “Emerald Seas.”

became known by the Maori name of Whare Ra or "the House of the Sun." Back in England, Felkin established three more temples of the S. M. in 1916. These included the Hermes Lodge in Bristol, the Merlin Lodge, and the Secret College in London. The primary focus of Felkin's group was on astral traveling.

Felkin's abilities as the leader of a magical Order were somewhat lacking compared to Mathers. He went searching all over Europe for the Secret Chiefs of the Order in physical form. The teachings of the Order suffered as a result.

In the 1930s, Israel Regardie came on the scene. Regardie had been Aleister Crowley's secretary from 1928 to 1930. In 1932, he wrote a book called *The Tree of Life* and, shortly after, *A Garden of Pomegranates*. These books caused quite a stir in the temples of both the Stella Matutina and the Alpha et Omega.

Many members of both the Stella Matutina and the Alpha et Omega remembered Crowley as a disruptive insurgent from years before, therefore Regardie's previous connection to Crowley caused some members to lash out at him. One of the leaders of the Alpha et Omega, E. J. Langford-Garstin, went so far as to write Regardie in a letter condemning him in no uncertain terms and asking him to never again mention the name of the Golden Dawn in print. Other members, most notably Dion Fortune, defended him, as can be seen from her article in the *Occult Review* praising Regardie's *The Tree of Life*. Her article did more to reveal the true essence of the Golden Dawn, and to a broader audience, than anyone had divulged previously. The chiefs of the Stella Matutina seemed to play both ends against the middle. A representative of the Order wrote a letter to Dion Fortune strongly agreeing with her viewpoint, and another letter to Langford-Garstin stating how irresponsible he considered Dion Fortune's actions and sentiments to be. In one of the great faux pas in the history of esoteric groups, the two letters ended up in the wrong envelopes.⁴²

As a result, the door of initiation swung open for Regardie. With Dion Fortune's support, he was invited to join the Stella Matutina. In his

42. King, Francis. *Modern Ritual Magic: The Rise of Western Occultism* (Great Britain: Prism Press, 1989), 154.

words: "It was on the basis of *The Tree of Life* that I was invited to join the Order." Regardie joined the Hermes Temple of the Stella Matutina in 1933 and became an Adept in 1934.

Unfortunately the Stella Matutina was dying a slow death. The leaders of the group were claiming to hold highly exalted grades with little understanding of the basic material. Many of the knowledge lectures had been changed or dropped altogether. Regardie was extremely vexed with the chiefs of the Stella Matutina for being far too concerned with attaining grandiose titles and not concerned enough with the practice of magic. He was very worried that a system of immense value was being gradually destroyed:

With each of the schisms and quarrels which have occurred from time to time, various official documents have been lost, or, what is simply criminal, deliberately destroyed. Unbelievable as it may sound, the attitude seems to have been "If I can't make use of these papers, then nobody shall. Into the fire they go." . . . It would be monstrous and tragic were this knowledge lost to those who seek the Light along this Path.⁴³

Regardie concluded that the Order and its teachings would not survive much longer without some effort to place those teachings in the hands of a greater number of people who could appreciate them. His choice was this: keep his oath of secrecy to those who were letting the Order lapse into a severe state of neglect, or publish them and suffer criticism but be assured that the system itself would survive. After leaving the Order, Regardie made the decision to print most of the Order's lectures and rituals in his book *The Golden Dawn*, published in 1937.

[I]t is essential that the whole system should be publicly exhibited so that it may not be lost to mankind. For it is the heritage of every man and woman—their spiritual birthright. . . . My motives have been to prove without a doubt that no longer is the Order the ideal medium for the transmission of Magic, and that since there have already been

43. Regardie, *My Rosicrucian Adventure* (1936). Reprinted as *What You Should Know About the Golden Dawn* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Falcon Press, 1987), 49.

several partial and irresponsible disclosures of the Order teaching, a more adequate presentation of that system is urgently called for. Only thus may the widespread misconceptions as to Magic be removed.⁴⁴

As Regardie had predicted, in the next couple of years, most of the already moribund temples of the A. O. and the S. M. (with the exception of an offshoot temple in New Zealand) stopped doing group work. By the late 1930s all but two of the offshoot temples had become inactive. The last British temple, Hermes in Bristol, went into abeyance in the early 1960s and officially closed down in 1972. The last temple in New Zealand formally closed its doors in 1978.

It would be only four short years from the folding of the New Zealand temple that an elderly Israel Regardie would resuscitate a viable, living branch of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in Columbus, Georgia, in 1982.

While Regardie had been long disillusioned with the old Chiefs of the Stella Matutina, he had nothing but high praise for the Golden Dawn's system of magic:

[T]he Hermetic order of the Golden Dawn—an organization which has exerted a greater influence on the development of occultism since its revival in the last quarter of the nineteenth century than most people can realize. There can be little or no doubt that the Golden Dawn is, or rather was until very recently, the sole depository of magical knowledge, the only Occult Order of any real worth that the West in our time has known.⁴⁵

44. Ibid., 41, 44.

45. From Israel Regardie's 1937 introduction to *The Golden Dawn*. See the 6th edition of *The Golden Dawn* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), 16.



Magic: What It Is and How It Works

Within the teachings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the name of Hermes was invoked to describe a system of Western magic that combined the many scattered and diverse threads of the Hermetic Tradition into a unified body of knowledge designed to improve the spiritual evolution of its initiates and, by extension, the whole of humanity.

The Western Esoteric Tradition, as described in a previous chapter, consists of many branches, offshoots, and spin-offs. Not all groups that are included under the umbrella of Hermeticism are magical groups. Some Rosicrucian fraternities, such as the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (the S. R. I. A.) are devoted to research into the Western spiritual traditions, but not the practice of magic. Others, such as the Freemasons, are initiatory fraternities that are firmly embedded in the Western tradition, but magic plays absolutely no role in their practices.

Some groups are considered mystical rather than magical, their concept of mysticism being strictly defined as spiritual revelation or union with the divine that is achieved through intuition, faith, ecstasy, or sudden insight through the practice of contemplation, meditation, or the recitation of prayers. Mysticism is sometimes considered a more passive approach to the divine, as opposed to magic, which is more active. A magician actively pursues union with the divine through ritual, the creation and consecration of talismans, divination, assumption of godforms,

conversing with angels and other spiritual entities, etc. In truth, skilled magicians must be both mystic and magician. They must seek union with the divine through both active and passive means.

The Order of the Golden Dawn was designed from the beginning to be a magical fraternity. Its curriculum was based on the study of magical philosophy and its more advanced members were expected to practice and become skilled in the high magical arts. However, before we can examine the specific magical practices of the Golden Dawn, it is important that the reader have a clear understanding of what magic is.

Defining Magic

Magic: the art of persons who claim to be able to do things by the help of supernatural powers or by their own knowledge of nature's secrets.—*The New Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.

What is magic? Ask a dozen people this question and you may well get a dozen different answers. And these answers will also depend on whether or not the individual answering the question views magic in a favorable or an unfavorable light.

The subject of magic is one of those hot-button topics that tends to trigger widely differing emotional reactions in people. Hundreds of B-rated Hollywood movies on the subject of magic, while providing thrilling entertainment, have done little but continue to propagate misinformation and falsehoods about what magic is, how it works, and why magicians practice it.

A majority of people living in the industrialized nations of the twenty-first century undoubtedly believe that individuals who practice magic are primitive, superstitious, crazy, or all three. At the extreme end of this group are those who are convinced that there is absolutely nothing supernatural about the universe—no God, no spirits, no afterlife. To them, nothing exists beyond the physical world that they can see, touch, or understand using logic. Such skeptics often think of themselves as “scientific-minded” but in reality they have little capacity for imagination and creative thinking. At the other end of the spectrum are those who would

believe absolutely anything they read or hear, no matter how unlikely or extraordinary. The problem with this group of "true believers" is that they lack the capacity for discrimination and judgment.

Somewhere in the center exists a group of people who live and work in a modern world, and yet believe in magic, the supernatural, and psychic abilities. Among this group are a fraction of individuals who call themselves magicians. And a certain percentage of these call themselves Golden Dawn magicians.

Magic is often described in terms that are both scientific and religious, to the consternation of both scientists and clergy. It has been defined as "the method of science, the aim of religion." It is precisely because magic encroaches on the territories of both that it often receives the slings and arrows of the egocentric scientist and the resentful cleric.

Eliphas Levi, the nineteenth-century occultist and former clergyman, held the magical arts in high esteem:

Magic combines in a single science that which is most certain in philosophy with that which is eternal and infallible in religion. It reconciles perfectly and incontestably those two terms so opposed on the first view—faith and reason, science and belief, authority and liberty. It furnishes the human mind with an instrument of philosophical and religious certainty, as exact as mathematics, and even accounting for the infallibility of mathematics themselves.¹

Aleister Crowley, a practitioner of modern magic and one-time student of the Golden Dawn tradition, gave a short but precise definition of magic: "Magic is the Science and Art of causing change to occur in conformity with Will."² In this case, "Will" is understood not in terms of the individual's petty wants and desires, but rather as an intention that is in harmony with the fundamental essence of the individual's Higher Self, and also in full accord with natural or cosmic law. But this definition is too narrow, since it implies that every intentional act is a magical act, so

1. Eliphas Levi, *The History of Magic* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1999), 29.

2. Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1976), xii.

long as the magician wills it. This is true in the wider sense because practitioners of magic believe that the universe we live in is completely divine and magical in all its aspects. In this case, however, we are searching for a more specific meaning for the ritual practices undertaken by magicians. The magician may will himself to sit down in a chair, but that does not make it magic according to the definition that we are seeking here.

Dion Fortune, also a former member of the Golden Dawn who went on to found her own school of magic, added another dimension to this definition: "Magic is the Science and Art of causing change in consciousness to occur in conformity with Will." This definition takes into account the power of the human mind to affect an inner spiritual change that will influence the outer, physical world. Change in consciousness is certainly an important factor in magic, but this definition, too, is not the whole story.

The following explanation is one that we feel comes close to defining magic: "Magic is the science and art of causing change (in consciousness) to occur in conformity with will, using means not currently understood by traditional Western science."³

Even though magic cannot be explained by science, it is wrong to conclude that magic is "supernatural," although in trying to describe magic, the limitations of language make it difficult to refrain from using such terms. Magic is entirely natural—it functions in accordance with natural law even if we do not always perceive it that way.

A more complete definition of magic requires a paragraph:

Magic is the art and science of causing change to occur in conformity with will. This change can occur 1) in the outer, manifest world; 2) in the magician's consciousness; and 3) most often in both, for changing one often changes the other. Magical change occurs in a way that is not currently understood by modern science because it works through the Unmanifest—through subtle manipulations of the invisible, spiritual realms. However, the workings of magic are subject to natural law. The effects of magic are sometimes clearly visible in the physical world and

3. Donald Michael Kraig, *Modern Magick* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1988), 9.

other times they are only apparent on a personal, spiritual level. The workings of magic are not limited by the constraints of time and space.

Magic and Religion

In archaic times, magic and religion could have been considered as one and the same. In many ancient civilizations religion and magic shared a fundamental origin and unity. However, modern magic, which can be considered a refinement of so-called "medieval magic," is entirely distinct from religion. Magic has its own set of attributes, mental processes, and natural or scientific laws, whereas religion depends more on faith, creed, and official doctrine. In short, religion is a specific belief or set of beliefs, values, and practices usually based on the teachings of a spiritual leader. Magic is a method or mechanism of causing change in accordance with cosmic laws.

In a very simplified analogy, magic inclines toward thinking and doing while religion gravitates toward feeling and being. The two are very definitely related, but they are not identical. The yearning for the supernatural propels them both, though in different ways.

Organized religion also tends to limit access to the supernatural world within the bulwark of a formalized theology, and the faithful are strongly encouraged to remain within that framework. In magic, however, the individual is encouraged to experience the supernatural realms for him- or herself.

Magical methods and rites may be used to supplement one's religion practice. This is because ritual magic often involves working with deities, archangels, angels, spirits, and other divine beings that are also recognized by various religions. Down through the years the practice of magic has threaded its way through nearly every religion, although it has not always been recognized as such. There is little difference between a "devotional prayer" and an "invocation," or between an "act of magic" and a "miracle," other than semantics and the practitioner's understanding (or lack thereof) that these things are universal to the human spiritual experience irrespective of one's religious beliefs. Magic is a process that works the same way, according to the same laws or cosmological mechanics,

regardless of whichever religion, sect, or deity one works with. The practice of magic is not restricted to any one faith or dogma, and it works according to the same set of natural principles.

Virtually every major world religion and many of the lesser-known sects contain an exoteric (outer or public) religious practice that is available and understandable to all members of that faith. But coinciding with the public religion there is also usually an esoteric (inner, personal, or private) religious practice that is only available and understandable to a select number of individuals: a priesthood. Members of a religion's inner circle, who have access to that faith's highest teachings, may well employ magical methods to enhance their spiritual work. Many people know this to be true of the religions of the East, but it is equally true of the Western faiths, including Christianity. It is certainly true that the best priests and priestesses also make the best magicians.

The Ancient Origins of Western Magic

The word *magic* is derived from the Greek *mageia* (μαγεία), the science and religion of the Zoroastrian priests. According to some, it is derived from the Greek *megas*, meaning "great," indicating the "great" science.⁴

The "great science" of the Zoroastrian priests that eventually found its way into the spiritual practices of the West can be traced back to the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, the lush river valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Spanning a period from 4000–538 B.C.E., the cultures of Sumeria, Akkad, and Babylon (sometimes called Chaldea) had a major influence on Western magic, particularly on that type of magic that is sometimes called *thaumaturgy*, which is Greek for "miracle-working." This type of magic is used to create change in the material or lower world. Life in the Fertile Crescent was harsh and uncertain. It was thought that human beings were created to serve the needs of the gods. Thus the Mesopotamians saw life in general as a daily struggle against unfriendly forces, indifferent deities, and hostile spirits. To combat these

4. Lewis Spence, *An Encyclopedia of Occultism* (New York: Citadel Press, 1996), 258.

forces the Babylonians developed an aggressive system of magic designed to change their circumstances for the better. Private homes usually contained shrines to the owner's personal god or goddess, where prayers and sacrifices were made to attract the deity's favor. Prayers were often designed to implore the gods for the power to defeat devils and evil spirits. Magical arts and incantations were developed as ways of appeasing friendly spirits and driving off malicious ones. The average Babylonian often employed the services of astrologers and magi (hereditary priest-magicians) for divination, healing, blessing of amulets and talismans, purification, cursing, and warding off evil. The spirit realm of Babylon was often unsympathetic to the needs of humans, therefore a magician needed to assert his authority and control over the denizens of the invisible world—sometimes binding and threatening the spirits into obeying his commands.

The influence of Babylonian magic can be seen in the grimoires or magical textbooks of the medieval and Renaissance eras, such as *The Lesser Key of Solomon*, wherein the magician evokes, binds, and threatens the unruly lesser spirits into doing his will.

However, the worldview of the Mesopotamians was not the only perspective that affected the development of Western magic. The ancient Egyptians added their unique, more optimistic view of the universe to the genealogy of occidental magic.

Unlike the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent, the dwellers of the Nile River Valley had a more favorable outlook on life, due in part to a kinder environment, fewer deadly floods and famines, and fewer conquering invaders. In contrast to the Mesopotamians, who tended to regard the afterlife as a rather dreary existence, the Egyptians saw life after death as a positive attestation of eternal life. As a result, a great deal of the spiritual literature that the Egyptians left behind dealt with the purification of the body and soul in preparation for a desirable afterlife spent in the company of the gods. The funerary texts of the Egyptians contain some of the most sublime prayers and invocations ever written, and many of them are still used by ceremonial magicians. Egyptian texts and rites focusing on the purification of the soul had a profound influence on what would later be termed high magic or theurgy.

In ancient times magic was seen as an outside force or deity. In Egypt, magic was personified as Heka, a deity whose name meant "magical power." Heka was thought to be employed by the creator god to form the world out of chaos. The gods used Heka to produce humanity, and it was also seen as a gift given to humanity by the gods to deflect the blows of fate. Since Heka was the energy continually used by the gods in the process of creation, the Egyptians reasoned that this magical force could also be used by human beings in their endeavors.

Egyptian and Mesopotamian magic were two of the original streams that flowed into the main artery of Western magic. But there were other influences as well. The Greeks added their own flavor to the mix, not only through the wisdom of classical philosophers such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, but also through the amalgamation of different cultures that comprised the ancient world after Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, Syria, and Persia. Under Hellenistic rule, a magnificent cosmopolitan civilization emerged that was clearly Greek in flavor, but metamorphosed by the traditions of native cultures and the broad new surroundings that the Greeks now controlled. It was in this environment that the various philosophies, faiths, and magical techniques of the ancient world rubbed shoulders with each other. And it was here that the foundation of Western magic as we know it was laid.

The resulting spiritual literature of the time, including the magical spells and invocations of the *Greco-Egyptian Magical Papyri*, borrowed heavily from Gnosticism and other early forms of Christianity; Judaism with its multitude of angelic hierarchies; Babylonian magic with its emphasis on astrology, spells, and curses; and Egyptian magic with its liturgy and invocations. The *Magical Papyri* contain bits and pieces of mythological material and folklore, as well as portions of lost liturgy, prayers, invocations, and rituals. These texts and others, including the Neoplatonic rites described in the *Chaldean Oracles* and the *Hermetica*, would have a great impact on the magical practices of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period.

Medieval Magic

The period known in European history as the Middle Ages was an era between antiquity and the Renaissance, often dated from 476 to 1453 C.E. A magician practicing his craft in medieval times would very likely have thought of magic in simple terms, not in the scientific or psychological jargon that is used today. To the medieval magician, magic included the ancient arts of alchemy and astrology, but its most evident feature was working with spirits. Magical texts of the period, known as *grimoires* (meaning “grammars”), were primarily concerned with the interaction between the magician and the spirit world—an invisible world populated with hordes of spiritual entities: archangels, angels, planetary intelligences, elementals, and demons. The grimoires, like the *Greco-Egyptian Magical Papyri* before them, contained every manner of magical spell and practice: spells for attracting lovers, for finding buried treasure, to heal a sick person, to bring prosperity in business, to summon a spirit helper, and so forth.

With the advent of paper as a writing medium, books became much more common even if literacy remained the province of the clergy and nobility. A surplus of unemployed clergymen in medieval society can be credited with writing the grimoires. Ironically, these spell books were banned by the church in large part because they were written and used by an unsupervised clerical underground.⁵ In the days of the Inquisition, when the medieval church was dedicated to rooting out heresy and burning heretics and witches, it was dangerous to even own a copy.

Renaissance Magic

The period dating from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries brought a new discussion as to how magic was viewed, at least by scholars, humanists, philosophers, and magicians—*magic as a natural phenomenon*.

5. Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 12–13.



Figure 9: The soul of the world, showing the threefold cosmos

We have previously discussed Marsilio Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which the church wrongly assumed was written by an ancient Pagan author who foreshadowed the teachings of Christ. In addition to the philosophical tracts contained within the *Hermetica*, there were also a number of magical elements. Ficino was naturally intrigued by this material and began to experiment with it. Realizing that he was treading on dangerous ground, as far as the church was concerned, Ficino very carefully and emphatically stated that the magic that he was concerned with was natural magic and not angelic or daimonic magic.

The Aristotelian view of the universe, prevalent at the time, theorized that the Earth was at the center of a threefold cosmos. Beyond the Earth was the heavenly realm of God and the angelic powers. Between heaven and Earth was the area of the celestial spheres—the stars, planets, and luminaries of the sun and moon (see figure 9). The heavenly powers were thought to control the motions of the planetary spheres that, in turn, influenced the Earth below.

The powers of the heavenly realm were considered the domain of the church alone. But the powers of the celestial spheres and their influence on the Earth were considered part of the natural world. Using the language of astrology to create hymns, assemble correspondences that were in harmony with different celestial energies, and create planetary talismans, Ficino insisted that he was using purely natural forces that had nothing to do with summoning spirits or working with angels. This explanation spared him from the wrath of the church.

By comparison, Ficino's daring student, Pico della Mirandola, threw caution to the wind by embracing the Jewish Qabalah and making it the cornerstone of Western magic. The conjuration and invocation of angels, archangels, and even the successive emanations of God were at the forefront of Qabalistic magic. Pico was alternately condemned or praised, depending on which pope was in power.

But Pico opened wide the door for other Renaissance scholars who came to view both the celestial world and the heavenly realms as part and parcel of the natural universe. It was just as acceptable to work with angels as it was to work with planetary energies, since both belong to a

single cosmic reality that was natural and divine. This view was best explained by Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535), one of the most important and influential magicians of his time, who defended magic as a method for understanding God and Creation:

Magick is a faculty of wonderful virtue, full of most high mysteries, containing the most profound contemplation of most secret things, together with the nature, power, quality, substance, and virtues thereof, as also the knowledge of whole nature, and it doth instruct us concerning the differing, and agreement of things amongst themselves, whence it produceth its wonderful effects, by uniting the virtues of things through the application of them one to the other, and to their inferior suitable subjects, joining and knitting them together thoroughly by the powers and virtues of the superior bodies. This is the most perfect, the chief science, that sacred, and sublimer kind of philosophy, and lastly the most absolute perfection of all most excellent philosophy.⁶

Many of today's practicing magicians would no doubt agree.

How Magic Works

The techniques of magic are many, but they are all concerned, in varying degrees, with awakening psychic abilities or faculties of perception within the mind of the magician. Like any other science, magic has its own set of theories and rules. Magic conforms to a set of principles whose effects can be recorded. However, these effects often occur on a personal, psychic, and spiritual level and therefore cannot be recorded using the standard physical apparatus of modern science, which is simply not equipped to deal with spiritual matters. For now, science is limited to exploring only the physical universe.

Like modern science, magic operates according to rules of cause and effect, but unlike science, magic explores the nonphysical, spiritual universe.

6. Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, edited and annotated by Donald Tyson (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1993), Book I, chapter 2.

Eliphas Levi, the nineteenth-century French occultist whose work was of primary importance to the founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, gave an explanation of how magic worked in his books titled *Dogma and Ritual of High Magic* and *The Mysteries of Magic*. Three basic "laws" or theories of magic can be gleaned from his writings:

(1) The law of importance of human willpower. Human willpower is not some abstract idea, but a real force that is capable of being trained. A trained human will is capable of causing change and producing physical effects. According to Levi:

Nothing can resist the will of man when he knows what is true and wills what is good.⁷ . . . Learn how to will. How can one learn to will? This is the first Arcanum of magical initiation.⁸

(2) The law of the astral light. (Levi also refers to this as the great Universal Agent, the Magical Agent, or the Soul of the World. See Plato's idea of the World Soul, chapter 1.) The astral light is an invisible spiritual substance that penetrates everything in the universe. The astral light can be used by magicians to cause change at any distance in space.

There exists a force in Nature which is far more powerful than steam, by which a single man, who can master it and knows how to direct it might throw the world into confusion and transform its face. It is diffused through infinity, it is the substance of heaven and earth, for it is either fixed or volatile according to its degrees of polarization. It was termed by Hermes Trismegistus, the Grand Telesma. When it produces radiance it is called light. It is that substance which was created by God before all else when He said: Let there be light. It is substance and motion at one and the same time; it is fluid and a perpetual vibration. The inherent force by which it is put into activity is called magnetism. In infinite space it is ether, or etherized light; it becomes astral light in the stars which it magnetizes, while in organized beings it becomes magnetic light or fluid. In man it forms the astral body or plastic mediator.⁹

7. Levi quoted in Arthur Edward Waite's *The Mysteries of Magic: A Digest of the Writings of Eliphas Levi* (Kila, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing Co.), 63.

8. Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1995), 205.

9. Levi, quoted in Waite, *The Mysteries of Magic*, 68–69.

Levi describes the how the force of human willpower can direct or mold the astral light to affect change for good or for ill:

The will of intelligent beings acts directly on this light, and by means thereof, upon all nature, which is made subject to the modifications of intelligence. This force was known to the ancients; it consists of a universal agent having equilibrium for its supreme law, while its direction depends immediately on the Great Arcanum of transcendent magic. By the direction of this agent we can change the very order of the seasons, produce in the night the phenomena of day, correspond instantaneously from one end of the earth to the other . . . heal or hurt at a distance, and endow human speech with a universal reverberation and success.¹⁰

The Astral Light is the key of all dominion, the secret of all powers, the universal glass of visions, the bond of sympathies, the source of love, prophecy and glory, the instrument of thaumaturgic art and of divination. To know how to master this agent so as to profit by and to direct its currents is to accomplish the Magnum Opus . . .¹¹

(3) The law of correspondence. This law, based on older medieval theories concerning the "magical virtues" of different substances, states that everything in the Greater Universe has a corresponding part in the Lesser Universe. Man, the Microcosm, is a smaller reflection and extension of the Greater Universe, the Macrocosm. To effect a change in one is to effect a change in the other. According to Levi's view, it was man's soul, more so than his body, which was believed to be the "magical mirror of the universe." The universe we live in is not a mixture of chance factors and events, but an ordered system of correspondences. The idea that there is a clear connection and relationship between the greater (macro) universe and the lesser (micro) human universe is one of the basic principles of magic.

Levi states:

There is only one dogma in Magic, and it is this: The visible is the manifestation of the invisible, or in other terms, the perfect word, in

10. Ibid., 69.

11. Ibid., 73.

things appreciable and visible, bears an exact proportion to the things which are inappreciable by our senses and unseen by our eyes. The Magus raises one hand towards heaven and points down with the other to [E]arth, saying: "Above, immensity: Below, immensity still! Immensity equals immensity."—This is true in things seen, as in things unseen.¹²

The *Emerald Tablet*, one of the ancient writings attributed to Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, defined this in a short but precise axiom of Hermetic wisdom: "As above, so below."

The Law of Correspondence includes the idea that certain objects, symbols, or substances are connected to different energies—through vibration, color, or character. These associations are usually planetary, zodiacal, or elemental, but they can also include the characteristics of plants, stones, metals, deities, etc. The Neoplatonic Theurgist, Iamblichus, would have certainly recognized this Law as essential to the working of high magic:

For, since it is requisite that terrestrial nature should by no means be destitute of divine communication, the earth also receives a certain divine portion from it, sufficient for the participation of the Gods. The theurgic art, therefore, perceiving this to be the case, and thus having discovered in common, appropriate receptacles, comfortably to the peculiarity of each of the Gods, it frequently connects together stones, herbs, animals, aromatics, and other sacred, perfect, and deiform substances of the like kind; and afterward, from all these, it produces an entire and pure receptacle.¹³

By using certain substances, such as metals, gemstones, colors, herbs, and incenses, the magician is choosing things that will help him concentrate and focus his willpower. By understanding the pattern of these correspondences as they relate to the soul, "the magical mirror of the universe," the magician is able to use them to affect change, for good or for ill. This is possible because the forces that the magician seeks to affect are

12. Levi, *Transcendental Magic*, 34–35.

13. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, translated by Thomas Taylor (San Diego, Calif.: Wizard's Bookshelf, 1984), 267.

inside of him as well as outside of him. They are the magician's own essential impulses magnified out into the cosmos. The conduit that exists between the magician's internal impulses and the cosmic forces that exist out in the greater universe is the faculty of imagination, which can be considered the most powerful tool of magic.

The Adepts of the Golden Dawn added what might be called a fourth law to this theory of magic.

(4) That human willpower must be combined with human imagination. Imagination is what directs and guides willpower. One Golden Dawn magician, Dr. Edward Berridge (V. H. Frater Resurgam), described it this way:

To Practice Magic, both the Imagination and the Will must be called into action, they are co-equal in the Work. Nay more, the Imagination must precede the Will in order to produce the greatest possible effect. The Will unaided can send forth a current, and that current cannot be wholly inoperative; yet its effect is vague and indefinite, because the Will unaided sends forth nothing but the current of force.

The Imagination unaided can create an image, and this image must have an existence of varying duration; yet it can do nothing of importance, unless vitalized and directed by the Will.

When however, the two are conjoined—when the Imagination creates an image—and the Will directs and uses that image, marvelous Magical effects may be obtained.¹⁴

Levi probably would have agreed. In his writing, he referred to the imagination as the Diaphane or the Translucent—"the omnipotence of which exclusively belongs to the domain of magic." It is a faculty that "exalts the will and gives it power over the universal agent."¹⁵ He writes:

Imagination is actually as the eye of the soul, and it is therein that forms are delineated and preserved; by its means we behold the reflections of the invisible world, it is the mirror of visions and the

14. Francis King, *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy By S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others* (Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books, 1987), 33.

15. Levi, *The Mysteries of Magic*, 66–67.

apparatus of magical life. . . . What we call the imagination in man is the inherent faculty of the soul to assimilate to itself the images and reflections contained in the living light, or Great Magic Agent . . . These images and reflections are relations when science intervenes to disclose to us their Logos or light. The man of genius differs from the dreamer and the madman in only this, that his creations are analogous to truth, while those of madmen and dreamers are lost reflections and wandering images. Thus, for the sage to imagine is to see, as for the magician to speak is to create.¹⁶

Aureolus Paracelsus (1493–1541), one of the foremost alchemists of the Renaissance, stated nearly the same thing centuries earlier, and went so far as to say that all tools, correspondences, and rituals were far inferior and even unnecessary when compared to the power of the imagination:

The Magical is a great hidden wisdom, and reason is a great open folly. No armour shields against magic for it strikes at the inward spirit of life. Of this we may rest assured, that through full and powerful imagination only can we bring the spirit of any man into an image. No conjuration, no rites are needful; circle-making and the scattering of incense are mere humbug and jugglery. The human spirit is so great a thing that no man can express it; eternal and unchangeable as God Himself is the mind of man; and could we rightly comprehend the mind of man, nothing would be impossible to us upon the earth. Through faith the imagination is invigorated and completed, for it really happens that every doubt mars its perfection. Faith must strengthen imagination, for faith establishes the will. Because man did not perfectly believe and imagine, the result is that the arts are uncertain when they might be wholly certain.¹⁷

Using these laws as a guide, we may summarize the mechanics of magic as follows. Magic works through the manipulation of the invisible and all-pervading substance known as the astral light. This substance can be likened to an unseen spiritual matrix or energy blueprint that mirrors everything in the manifest universe. The astral plane, a higher,

16. *Ibid.*, 67–68.

17. Spence, quoting Paracelsus, 261.

more subtle level of existence than that of the physical realm, contains an ethereal "image" of everything—whether it be living or nonliving, organic or inorganic. Magic works through the manipulation of the astral light, which is fluid, plastic, and malleable.

Although modern civilization tends to downplay imagination as a fantasy pastime of children, imagination is the ultimate creative faculty in human beings and primary instrument of magic. When we imagine something, we create an image of it in the astral light. When an inventor constructs an invention, he or she first creates it in the mind's eye, building up a mental picture of the mechanics involved and the shape and dimensions that the invention will take. In this way, the invention becomes a reality on the astral plane before it becomes a reality in the physical plane. The magician uses this same faculty of imagination to build up an image of what he or she desires to accomplish, giving it shape and form in the astral plane. Thus, the ability to visualize is essential in magic, and in magical groups such as the Golden Dawn, learning the art of visualization is fundamental to one's magical training. It also follows that one's power of concentration is vitally important to the magical procedure.

Furnished with an astral image, the inventor hires engineers or builders to bring the creation into manifestation. However, in magic, the end result may not always be so easily obtained. The magician may try to accomplish something on a personal, psychic, or spiritual level, as well as on a physical level, using a means not currently understood by physical science.

The goal of a specific magical working may vary—it may be to build an astral temple, to heal a sick friend, to communicate with angelic beings, to obtain needed finances for a new project, or to advance spiritual development. The image created by the magician in the astral light would reflect the desired end—the image of a great temple, a friend healed with no sign of illness, the figure of an angel speaking, a cherished project completed, or the light of the divine descending on the magician.

The faculty of imagination is the tool used to create a form in the astral light. But this form will remain inert unless vitalized by the force of

the current of will. In a very simplified comparison, we can turn to the analogy of target practice to explain this process. An image created on the astral plane can be likened to a bulls-eye target some distance away from the magician. The goal of the magician is to hit the target. He or she can choose from a wide assortment of weapons with which to hit the mark: a rifle with bullets, bow and arrows, throwing knives, a spear, a slingshot that hurls stones, or even a paintball fired from a gun. The weapons are analogous to the various correspondences (implements, incenses, gemstones, elements, planets, zodiacal signs, colors, etc.) that the magician can use to help accomplish his or her goal. The choice of the weapon or correspondence depends on the manner in which the magician wants to affect the target or complete the objective. A healing will require a solar correspondence, whereas a lunar correspondence should be used to initiate change and alternation. Finally, the magician can never hope to hit the target unless he or she actively takes careful aim and fires the weapon. This is an act of willpower; it is the driving force or catalyst that sets the magical process into motion. And, like the skill of aiming a weapon, the power of will must be precise, focused, and without distraction in order for it to hit its target and obtain the desired results.

In another analogy, the faculty of imagination is a skill, like the technical know-how used to build a computer. The creation of the astral image is the creation of the computer itself. The various correspondences are like the software that is loaded into the computer—each program has a specific purpose and function. And finally, human willpower is an invisible current of force that powers the image, not unlike the electricity that makes the computer run.

The steps of the magical process can be more easily understood if we order them as follows:

- 1) **Intent.** The magician must have a clear goal in mind.
- 2) **Correspondence.** The magician must choose which symbols, tools, and correspondences will best suit his or her needs.
- 3) **Image.** An image of the goal of the working is created and visualized in the astral light and built up through the faculty of imagination.

- 4) **Willpower.** The magician directs and focuses the force of will, like a laser, upon the desired end. This energizes the astral image so that its effects are felt on a personal, psychic, or physical level.

This is the method used in all magical workings. Take, for example, a classic Golden Dawn ritual known as the LBRP or the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (see chapter 6). A magician performing it has a clear intent or goal in mind, usually to set up a circle of protection or to purify the temple space. The correspondences of this particular ritual are very traditional: the protective symbol of the pentagram and the four Hebrew archangels of the elements. However, the magician has a choice of implement correspondences with which to perform the ritual: a simple banishing dagger, a lotus wand, a magic sword, or just the index finger. The magician may prefer the simple, straightforward use of the index finger and the power represented in the human hand. But if a particularly powerful banishing is needed, he or she may choose the added potency and symbolism of the Geburic Sword of Justice. While tracing the image of the protective pentagram, this figure is built up in the imagination so that it becomes a reality on the astral plane. This image is then energized by the will of the magician, who forcefully charges the center of the pentagram with a physical gesture while intoning a sacred name. The combination of the physical gesture and intonation helps to focus the current of willpower, like a spotlight, upon the image of the pentagram created in the astral light, vitalizing and empowering it.

Magic: The Enigmatic Art

While magicians have described natural “laws” to explain how the process of magic works, the exact workings of any one specific magical act cannot be pinned down. A magician may perform a ritual for a well-defined objective, but he or she cannot predict the specific manner (where, when, and how) in which the magical working will take effect. Also, the magical process in action tends to resemble luck or chance. Carl Jung’s concept of synchronicity, the coincidence of events that seem to be meaningfully related, is often a sign of magic at work. One result of working within a

magical discipline is an increase in one's powers of perception. Thus, events that are synchronistically linked are more likely to be noticed by the magician who is attuned to them.

Finally, magic in action will always seek the path of least resistance. Once the magician's intent is established, and a magical working performed to implement it, magic will take the easiest route, and sometimes even the most mundane route, to achieve the goal. For example, if a magician does a ritual to obtain a computer, there will be no instant "puff of smoke" to announce the supernatural materialization of a brand-new computer on the magician's desk. Instead the magician will perform the ritual, concentrating only on the end result (obtaining a computer), and leave it up to the magical process to work out how and when this will be accomplished. It might so happen that soon after the ritual, a friend or relative decides to upgrade his computer and give the old computer to the magician as a gift.

This is a very simple example, but it does make the point that magic often works through the easiest channels to accomplish the magician's goals.

High Magic: Theurgy

Magic in and by itself is neither "bad" nor "good." It is neither "black" nor "white." Magic is a neutral process that can be employed either for positive or negative ends. What makes magic either "evil" or "sacred" depends purely on the intent or objective of the magician, and whether that intent is corrupt or sublime.

The subject of magic is often divided up into specific categories having to do with intent, such as white magic (beneficial, ethical, or spiritual magic), black magic (harmful or malicious magic),¹⁸ or gray magic (that area of magic that is neither harmful nor particularly spiritual). Other

18. Black magic is destructive to anyone who is asinine enough to try it. It forms no part of Golden Dawn teachings and should be avoided at all costs. In Israel Regardie's words, someone who engages in black magic "should be shunned as one would shun a foul disease."

common classifications of magic include high magic (ceremonial or ritual magic) and low magic (folk magic). The magic of the Golden Dawn falls under the heading of high magic, also called ceremonial magic or theurgy ("divine action" or "god-working"). A ceremonial magician is often referred to as a theurgist.

One insightful definition of high magic was given in 1870 by Jean-Baptiste Pitois, writing under the pen name of Paul Christian in his monumental work *The History and Practice of Magic*:

The word Magic is derived from the Chaldean word *Maghdim*, which means wisdom with the addition of the general sense that we give to the term philosophy. The Magi, or the adepts of Magic—we may even call them the priests of the wisdom of antiquity—were philosophers dedicated to the study of the universe, that sphere whose center, they said, is everywhere, whose circumference has no bounds, and at the heart of which are united without being confounded—or are separate, without being lost from sight—the physical, the intellectual and the divine worlds: the triple face of all knowledge, the triple base of all analysis, the triple stem of all synthesis.¹⁹

The term *theurgia* was first used by the Platonists of the second century to explain the transformative power of sacred rites such as those described in the *Chaldean Oracles*. However, it was the fourth-century Neoplatonic philosopher, Iamblichus, who first provided a coherent justification for performing ritual acts of theurgy. The teachings of Iamblichus were extremely important to the development of Hermetic magic. His concept of a well-ordered and hierarchical universe that was accessible through divine ritual continued well beyond his own time and became part of the dominant worldview of medieval scholars and Renaissance magicians.

The theurgy of Iamblichus was active—it was not simply a discussion or contemplation about "things divine," but rather it demanded total

19. Paul Christian, *The History and Practice of Magic* (Secaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1972), 18–19. Editor Ross Nichols has footnoted the following: "Webster: From Greek *Magos*, Old Persian *Magu*; Persian *Mugh* = fire-worshipper. Found at Behistan in Egyptian cuneiform characters."

involvement on the part of the theurgist who worked to invoke and embody the divine principles of the cosmos. Iamblichus taught that each individual human soul was immersed within the body of matter, and that the soul required divine aid to free itself and return to the One Source of All. This divine assistance was given in the form of theurgic rites and ceremonies made potent by the gods. Iamblichus insisted that union with the transcendent God was only possible through the practice of these holy rituals.²⁰

The following definition of magic, given by Israel Regardie in his magnum opus, *The Tree of Life*, not only affirms Iamblichus' teachings on sacred rites, it also defines the theurgic magic of the Golden Dawn:

[A] mnemonic system of psychology in which the almost interminable ceremonial details, the circumambulations, conjurations, and suffumigations are deliberately intended for the exaltation of the imagination and soul, with the utter transcending of the normal plane of thought.²¹

Working with Spiritual Beings

Magic has been previously described as "the method of science, the aim of religion." Thus far we have discussed the mechanics or science of magic in detail. We have also studied the spiritual goal of theurgy, which is union with the divine. But we have only briefly touched on an essential aspect of magical work: Magic involves the active invocation of deities, angels, archangels, and other spiritual entities. Every aspect of the magical work of a Golden Dawn magician is intricately associated with (1) the idea of a transcendent, ineffable deity or the highest concept of divinity, and (2) the idea that between the world of humans and the Absolute Unity of God exists a myriad of spiritual entities. Most often, these entities that magicians work with are known as angels.

20. Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 5.

21. Israel Regardie, *The Tree of Life, An Illustrated Study of Magic* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 2001), 17.

The word *angel* comes from the Greek *angelos*, which is itself a translation of the Hebrew word *melakh*, meaning “messenger.” Angels have been described as “messengers of the soul.” A more precise definition states that an angel is “an intermediate Intelligence between the human and the One in the Great Chain of Being.”²² Marsilio Ficino said of them:

All the Intelligences, whether They are Those of the highest rank and superior to the Souls, or Lower and part of the Souls, are so interconnected that, beginning with God who is Their Head, they proceed in a long and uninterrupted Chain, and all the higher ones shed Their rays down on the lower.²³

The theurgist, too, is a part of this “uninterrupted chain” that is a divine hierarchy headed by the Ineffable One. This hierarchy includes various aspects of divinity or “essences” of God that can be identified as the many “divine names of God” in the Qabalistic tradition, or as the many celestial deities known in the pantheons of different religions. After the highest aspects of divinity, archangels, angels, and intelligences are next in the hierarchy. In the Qabalah, archangels and angels are considered specific aspects of God, each with a particular purpose and jurisdiction. Nearly all of the Hebraic angels have the suffixes “el” or “yah” at the end of their names, indicating that they are “of God.” Human beings are ranked in the middle of this divine hierarchy, connected to it by virtue of the human soul and the Higher Self, otherwise known as the Holy Guardian Angel—one’s personal angelic contact with the higher realms. Next in line after humans come the lower spirits and elementals.

Golden Dawn magicians adhere to this chain of command whenever they perform magical ceremonies. Regardless of how well a magician can perform the mechanics of magic, the work of theurgy can only take place when the magician’s will is in alignment with the Higher and divine Will of the universe. This can only come about through purification, purity of

22. Forrest, Adam, “This Holy Invisible Companionship,” *The Golden Dawn Journal: Book Two: Qabalah: Theory and Magic* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), 188.

23. *Ibid.*, Forrest quoting Ficino.

intent, and spiritual discipline. And in a divine universe, the Powers that Be must be petitioned through the proper channels, from the highest to lowest spiritual ranks. Therefore, in any ritual, the theurgist first invokes the highest divine names of God before invoking any lesser aspects of divinity or celestial deities. Then archangels, angels, and other intelligences are invoked. The magician works primarily with angels as “divine intermediates,” in both directions of the hierarchical ranks, requesting them to command the lesser spirits, rulers, and elementals to carry out the goal of the magical working. As stated in the *Adeptus Minor Ritual*:

For the True Order of the Rose Cross descendeth into the depths, and ascendeth into the heights—even unto the Throne of God Himself, and includeth even Archangels, Angels and Spirits.²⁴

Angelic beings are seen as companions on the theurgist's path, working together in the Great Chain of Being.

Golden Dawn Magic

There are several ways in which magic is applied in the Golden Dawn—in Qabalistic rites, divinations, consecration of talismans, skrying and visionary work, and so on. While the goal of a specific magical working might not seem entirely spiritual to the outside observer (such as performing a divination to ask a mundane question, or consecrate a talisman designed to attract the beneficent powers of the planet Jupiter), they are very important to the magician's understanding of the theurgic arts. All of these methods are designed to give the Golden Dawn student a broad, working knowledge of the magical process, as well as provide safeguards and guidelines for what to do and what not to do in magic. The only way to really learn magic is through practice—aided with advice from experienced authors, teachers, and peers. The real objective of all of these procedures, as practiced by Golden Dawn magicians, is to gain esoteric knowledge in order to be better able to connect with the divine and complete the Great Work.

24. Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), 231.

The theurgy of the Golden Dawn is magic of the highest spiritual quality. It is not performed for vain amusements, self-aggrandizement, or personal power. Rather it is performed for true knowledge of the divine Self and the betterment of humankind as a whole. This type of magic comes very close to true mysticism that transcends all religious dogmas—it is the best portion of all religions. The mystic seeks to rise within his inner being beyond the five senses to grasp the hidden nature of the universe and attain a direct experience of God or the Universal Reality. To accomplish this, the mystic employs meditation, contemplation, and prayer. The Golden Dawn magician also uses these methods, in addition to the techniques of ritual, invocation, etc.—the same theurgic techniques advocated by Iamblichus in the fourth century.

Divine theurgy is an act of self-creation and self-union. It is an awakening of the human soul to its highest potential. Theurgy is a burning desire—a desire to dedicate one's life to the search for divine knowledge. The magician seeks a deeply personal relationship with the Divine Self of the Universe. And this is accomplished through magic.

The tools of magic are the human faculties of mind, willpower, aspiration, and imagination. When the human will is purified and in harmony with that of the Divine Source of the Universe, then the magician can cause change to occur in the physical realm "in conformity with will."

Hermetic magic is a spiritual science—one of its basic principles states that the universe was created by a divine and eternal power, and that the essence of the universe is, indeed, divine. This magic is a specialized system of discipline that has a spiritual goal. It is a personal science based on the fundamental knowledge of the true human being that lies beyond the illusion of the outer, secular human.

The final objective of Golden Dawn ceremonial magic is the gradual purification of the student's lower or outer personality and the realization of an elevated state of consciousness, so that the Magician's ego gradually enters into a union with his or her own Higher Self and ultimately with the divine. Every action, idea, and utterance in any ceremony is designed to bring about this final conclusion. Each and every detail of a Golden Dawn ritual serves to remind the operator of this single

goal. Every impression, by means of a Hermetic and Qabalistic system of associated ideas, is made the beginning of a sequence of interrelated thoughts that culminate in the ultimate aim of the ceremony. When this is truly accomplished, and the perfect moment of spiritual euphoria is achieved, a clear and open channel is created between the intellectual mind and the soul, concluding in an increased concentration of magical potentialities, awareness, and the exaltation of the true and divine nature of the magician.

CHAPTER FOUR



The Structure of the Golden Dawn System

Any discussion of the Golden Dawn tradition must include a description of the various grades or levels of initiation, as well as the officers who carry out the work of the Order. The Golden Dawn Order structure is entirely based on a hierarchical system in which certain information and knowledge is retained for students who have reached specific grades or levels of achievement in their esoteric training. This is in keeping with the paradigm of a school, and the Golden Dawn is a school of the mysteries. The Hermetic art is a true science; therefore, would-be magicians “going through the grades” must commit the rudimentary knowledge of the system to memory, just as if they were students of medicine or engineering.

In addition, training in the magical arts implies an examination of various regions and levels of the student’s own consciousness or psyche—a process that is not always easy, and sometimes not always pleasant. Certain portions of the psyche, as well as certain areas of higher knowledge and training, should be left alone until the student has been thoroughly grounded and balanced by the step-by-step process of magical development established by the grade system of the Golden Dawn. The careful structuring of the Golden Dawn system includes built-in safeguards that are designed to furnish students with increased spiritual awareness, magical knowledge, and psychic integration in a manner that is both gradual and secure.

Grades and Officers

In order to comprehend the nature of ritual initiation into various grades of the Golden Dawn system, it is necessary to understand the philosophy and basic principles that the system is founded upon. The Golden Dawn was designed in such a way as to correlate the various grades of the Order to certain spiritual ideas and cosmic principles. The primary philosophy behind the grade system is the Qabalah, a Hebrew mystical system that professes to describe and categorize the universe, and encompasses knowledge of the universe's fundamental essence, composition, and evolution. Israel Regardie stated that "Qabalah is a trustworthy guide, leading to a comprehension of the universe and one's own self."¹ The Qabalah is a vibrant, living, and dynamic philosophy that includes ideas on the origin of the cosmos, the eternal mind of God, angelic hierarchies, practical magic, and the spiritual development of humankind. It is a precise mystical system that describes universal laws and shows us how to utilize spiritual principles in everyday life. Qabalah is at the heart of the Hermetic tradition; it is the foundation upon which the art of Western magic rests. Seen from a Qabalistic perspective, the universe is completely divine and everything contained within it is part of a universal unity that evolved out of the Ain Soph Aur—the Infinite, Limitless Light, a concept that is nearly beyond our limited understanding. For our purpose, we will refer to it as the Divine Light. It is the highest, transcendent ideal of God of which we can conceive.

The Qabalah teaches that the universe manifested from the Infinite in ten stages or emanations known as the sephiroth (the singular form is sephirah). The ten sephiroth or spheres are different aspects of divinity or expressions of god-consciousness. Some see the sephiroth as divine powers or vessels. Others regard them as divine tools or instruments of God (although not separated from God like human tools are separated from humans). All agree, however, that the sephiroth express divine attributions or essences that are organized into an archetypal pattern that is the model for everything that has come into the manifest universe. The relationships implied in the Tree of Life underscore the whole of existence,

1. Regardie, *The Tree of Life*, 18.

and so the attributes of the sephiroth may be found in any branch of knowledge. Although their basic definition confirms them as characteristics of the divine, they can be described in terms of human experience because men and women are formed, as stated before, in the image of the divine. They are usually shown in a diagram called the Tree of Life with the ten spheres arranged into three columns (see figure 10). One glance at this diagram is enough to reveal it as a system of perfect mathematics, symmetry, and beauty. The right-hand column is called the Pillar of Mercy, the left-hand column is called the Pillar of Severity, and the central column is called the Pillar of Mildness, or more often, the Middle Pillar. The ten sephiroth are:

NO.	NAME	TRANSLATION	ATTRIBUTE
1.	Kether	The Crown	Oneness, unity
2.	Chokmah	Wisdom	Force, expansion
3.	Binah	Understanding	Form, contraction
4.	Chesed	Mercy	Construction, dimensions
5.	Geburah	Power	Might, severity
6.	Tiphareth	Beauty	Balance, awareness
7.	Netzach	Victory	Emotion, desire
8.	Hod	Splendor	Intellect, reason
9.	Yesod	Foundation	Astral blueprint, matrix
10.	Malkuth	The Kingdom	Physical manifestation

The grades of the Golden Dawn correspond to the sephiroth on the Qabalistic Tree of Life. These grades also have elemental and planetary attributions. They are further divided into three separate groups known as the First or Outer Order, the Second or Inner Order, and the Third or Invisible Order. The First Order is the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which is a separate and distinct entity from that of the Second or Inner Order, known as the R. R. et A. C. or the Ordo Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis. A list of the grades from lowest to highest is as follows:

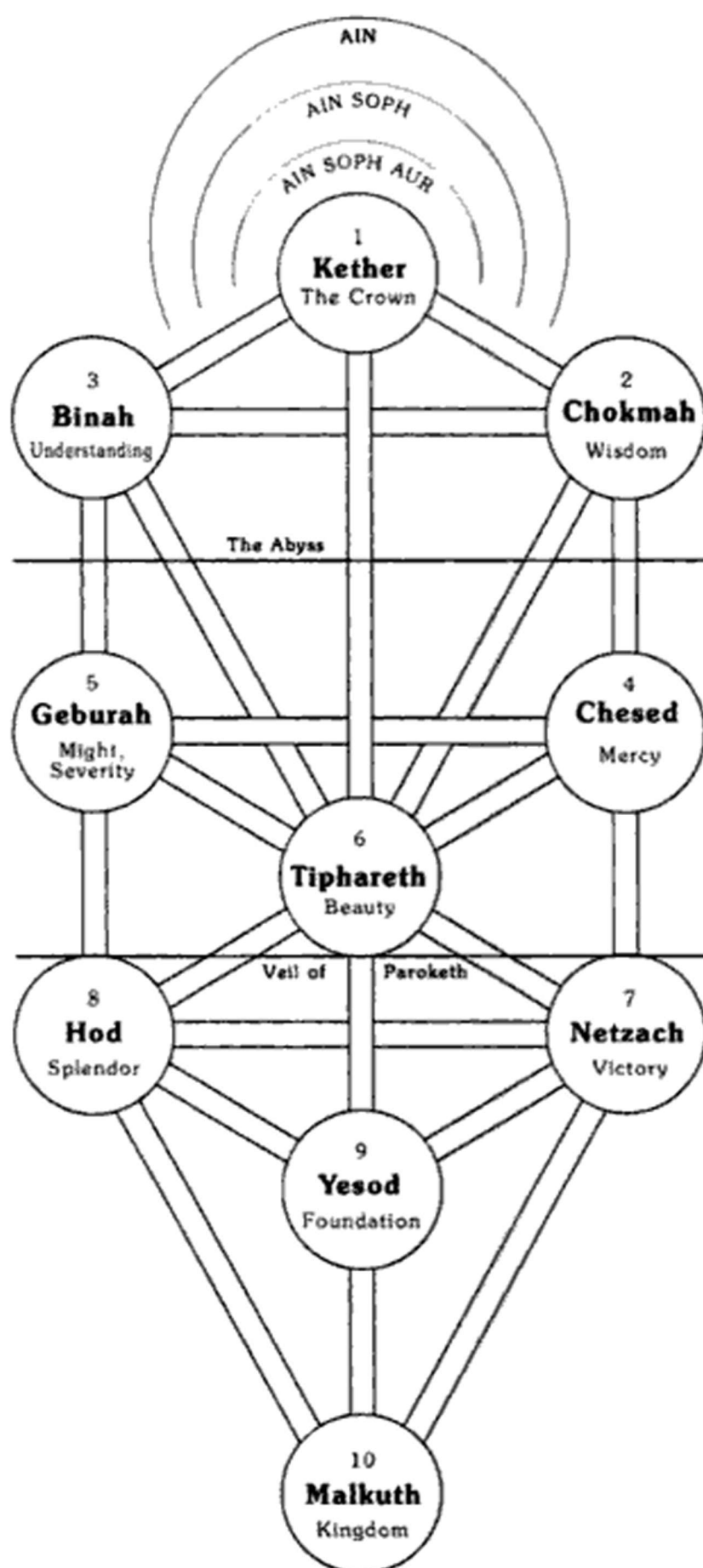


Figure 10: The Tree of Life

THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOLDEN DAWN SYSTEM

1ST ORDER GRADE	CORRESPONDING SEPHIRAH	ELEMENT	PLANET
Neophyte ①=①	———	———	———
Zelator ①=⑩	Malkuth	Earth	———
Theoricus ②=⑨	Yesod	Air	Moon
Practicus ③=⑧	Hod	Water	Mercury
Philosophus ④=⑦	Netzach	Fire	Venus
2ND ORDER GRADE	CORRESPONDING SEPHIRAH	ELEMENT	PLANET
Adeptus Minor ⑤=⑥	Tiphareth	———	Sun
Adeptus Major ⑥=⑤	Geburah	———	Mars
Adeptus Exemptus ⑦=④	Chesed	———	Jupiter
3RD ORDER GRADE	CORRESPONDING SEPHIRAH	ELEMENT	PLANET
Magister Templi ⑧=③	Binah	———	Saturn
Magus ⑨=②	Chokmah	———	———
Ipsissimus ⑩=①	Kether	———	———

The Qabalistic structure of the Golden Dawn is based on that of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia. The S. R. I. A. is an antiquarian group composed of Master Masons who research esoteric subjects. The names of the grades listed above are taken from Rosicrucian sources that date back to 1781.² These titles are also the names of the grades of the S. R. I. A.

There are numerical symbols attached to each grade, such as ①=① (zero equals zero) or ②=⑨ (two equals nine). The first number refers to the number of steps or initiations symbolically taken on the Qabalistic Tree of Life to attain that grade. The second number refers to the exact sephirah or sphere on the Tree of Life represented by that grade (see figure 11).

2. The original source for these titles was an expose called *Der Rosenkreutzer in Seiner Blöße* ("The Rosicrucian in His Nakedness") by Magister Pianco, also known as Baron Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen. They were reprinted in Kenneth MacKenzie's *Royal Cyclopaedia of Freemasonry*.

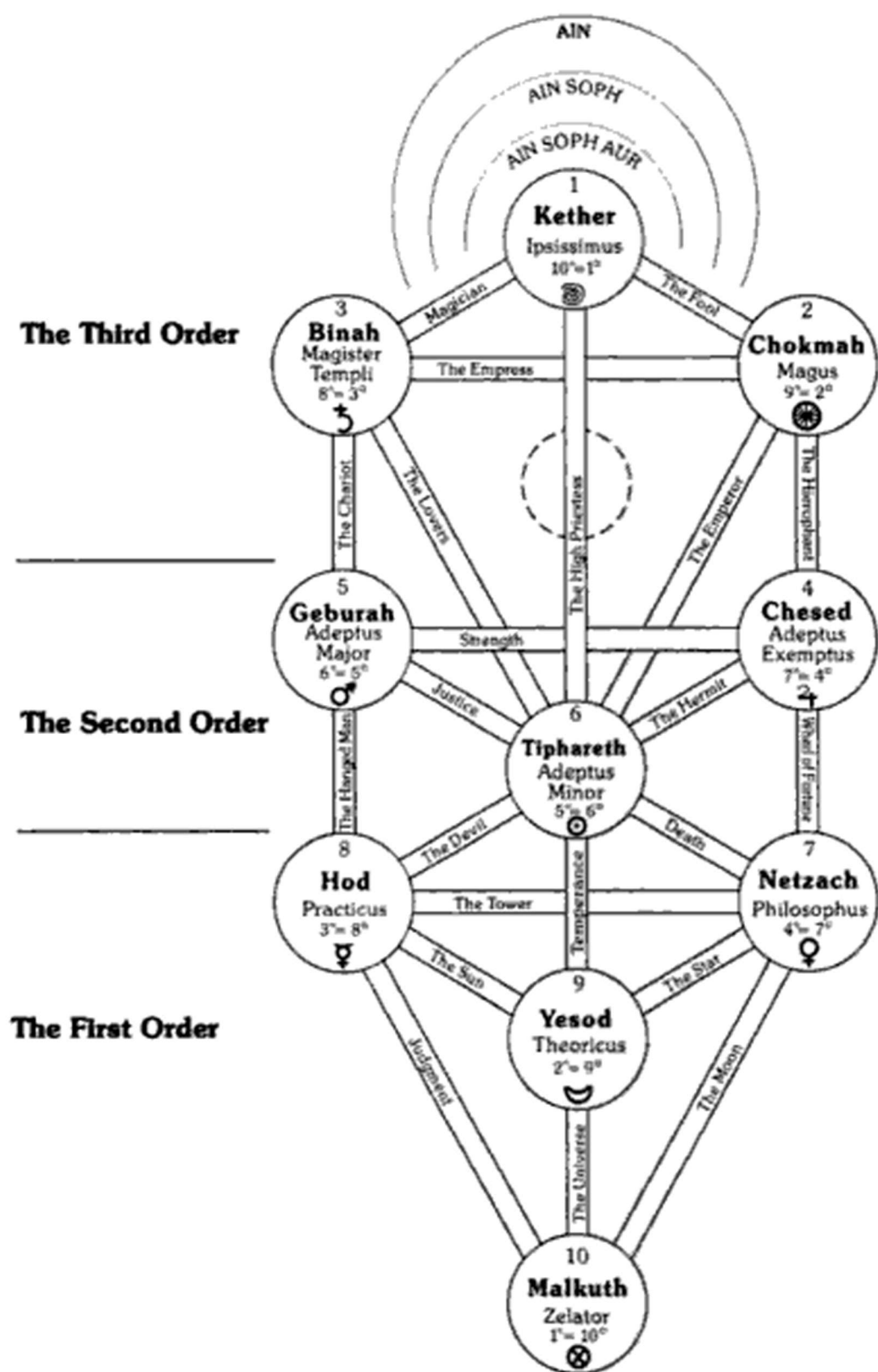


Figure 11: Grades of the Order

As in Freemasonry, a person who is preparing to be initiated into the Golden Dawn is called a candidate. Golden Dawn ceremonies are held in a room that is often called a Hall, as in the Hall of the Neophytes, although it is also often referred to as a temple.

The Greatly Honoured Chiefs

The Golden Dawn was founded and organized along the lines of a hierarchical system. The Outer Order is headed and directed by three individuals known as the Greatly Honoured Chiefs of the Second Order, who govern as a triad. Besides their administrative duties, the G. H. Chiefs take on the godforms of certain Egyptian deities and act as magical "batteries" or "channels" that intercede between the nonphysical Third Order (or inner-planes contacts) and the Second and First Orders. The names of the three Chiefs are the Praemonstrator, the Imperator, and the Cancellarius.

The symbols worn by these officers to indicate their rank include the lamen or pendant of the Circled Cross, a stylized form of the Rose Cross suspended from a collar, and the Cross and Triangle symbol of the Order of the Golden Dawn, which they rule over (see figure 12).

The Temple Chiefs

The Greatly Honoured Chiefs of the Second Order govern all temples of the Outer Order. However, individual temples are also governed by three Adepts known as the Temple Chiefs, who answer unto the G. H. Chiefs. Temple Chiefs have the same titles and regalia as the G. H. Chiefs, but they should not be confused with them, as their administration extends only to the respective temple placed in their care by the Order's ruling triad.

In a full-form ceremonial opening, the Chiefs are seated on a dais in the eastern part of the Hall. They wear mantles or outer cloaks of their respective colors over a white robe. Like all Golden Dawn officers, they wear the Egyptian-style headdress known as a nemyss in their respective colors.



*Imperator, Praemonstrator, Cancellarius,
Hierophant, Past Hierophant*



*Cross and
Triangle*



*Circled
Cross*



*Maltese
Cross*



Hexagram



Hieres



Hegemon



Keryx



Stolistes



Dadouchos



Fylfot Cross



Phylax



*Eye of
Horus*

Figure 12: Symbols used by Golden Dawn officers

Imperator

The title of *Imperator* is Latin for "commander, leader." The feminine form is *Imperatrix*. This officer is the lawgiver and figure of authority. The *Imperator* compels the obedience of the temple(s) to all ordinances, regulations, and policies set forth by the G. H. Chiefs. The *Imperator* symbolizes the element of fire and the Qabalistic sephirah of Geburah. The Egyptian deity associated with this officer is Nephthys, the sister goddess of Isis. The ceremonial regalia worn by the *Imperator* is primarily colored red trimmed with green, and his ritual implement is a red sword. This officer also represents the grade of Adeptus Major or ⑥=⑤.

Praemonstrator

The title of *Praemonstrator* is Latin for "a guide" and/or "one who prophesies." The feminine form is *Praemonstratrix*. This officer is the teacher or instructor. The *Praemonstrator* supervises the ritual work, curriculum, and teachings of the Outer Order as specified by the G. H. Chiefs of the Second Order. The *Praemonstrator* symbolizes the element of water and the Qabalistic sephirah of Chesed. The Egyptian deity associated with this officer is Isis, premier goddess and patron of magic. The ceremonial regalia worn by the *Praemonstrator* is primarily colored blue trimmed with orange, and his ritual implement is a blue wand surmounted by a Maltese Cross. This officer also represents the grade of Adeptus Exemptus or ⑦=④.

Cancellarius

The title of *Cancellarius* is Latin for "chancellor," indicating a high official in a church or university. It originally meant "doorkeeper." Its implied meaning is an intermediate—someone who occupies a middle position. The feminine form is *Cancellaria*. This officer is the scribe, secretary, or recorder. The *Cancellarius* is in charge of all written records, archives, and communications. It is his duty to convey all communications, Order documents, and knowledge lectures from the G. H. Chiefs of the Second Order to the temples. The *Cancellarius* symbolizes the element of air and the Qabalistic sephirah of Tiphareth. The Egyptian deity

associated with this officer is Thoth, the ibis-headed scribe of the gods. The ceremonial regalia worn by the Cancellarius is primarily colored yellow trimmed with violet, and his ritual implement is a yellow wand surmounted by a hexagram. This officer also represents the grade of Adeptus Minor or ⑤=⑥.

The Outer Order Officers of a Golden Dawn Temple

In a Golden Dawn temple that is opened in full ceremonial form, the Temple Chiefs, administrative officers who represent the Second Order, are seated on the dais in the east where they oversee the temple work and perform certain tasks of visualization and godform assumption³ during a ritual. However, they do not actively participate in the floor work or physical ritual duties of the ceremony. This is instead carried out by seven officers who are assigned to perform specific duties in the ritual work of the Outer Order. They are the Hierophant, Hieres, Hegemon, Keryx, Stolistes, Dadouchos, and Phylax. These Greek titles are derived from those of officiating priests of the ancient Greek mystery religions, such as the Eleusinian Mysteries.

All of these officers wear the black-and-white striped nemyss and a black robe (except for the Hierophant, who wears a white robe).

Hierophant

The title of *Hierophant* comes from the Greek *Hierophantes*, "he who shows sacred things" or "initiating priest." Its implied meaning is one who teaches spiritual matters, especially in regard to adorations and sacrifices. The feminine form is Hierophantissa. From his station on the dais in the east of the Hall, the Hierophant is the presiding officer and the inductor to the mysteries. It is the Hierophant who conducts all ceremonial work in a temple of the Outer Order under the authority of the G. H. Chiefs. The mantle or outer cloak worn by the Hierophant is primarily colored

3. Building up in the imagination, and then assuming the appearance of a god or goddess on the astral.

red, ornamented with a small white cross worn over a white robe. His ritual implements are a red crown-headed wand and the white Banner of the East or the Banner of Light. His lamén symbol is the circled cross. This officer also represents the Portal grade. The Egyptian deity associated with the Hierophant is Osiris, the slain and resurrected god. (The officer who has recently relinquished the office of Hierophant is known as the Past Hierophant, who also sits on the dais and is associated with a mature form of Horus known as Hoor Wer.)

Hiereus

The title of *Hiereus* means "priest" and it implies one who performs sacrifices in the temple. The feminine form is *Hiereia*. The *Hiereus* is the avenger of the gods, and the Guardian of the Sacred Mysteries. Stationed in the west, the *Hiereus*' duty is to protect the Hall from the profane and banish all that is evil or unbalanced. He also oversees the subordinate officers in the performance of their work. The outer cloak worn by the *Hiereus* is primarily colored black, ornamented with a small white cross. His ritual implements are a sword and the black Banner of the West or the Banner of Darkness. His lamén symbol is the triangle. The Egyptian deity associated with the *Hiereus* is Horus, the hawk-headed avenger of the gods. This officer also represents the ④=7 grade of Philosophus.

Hegemon

The title of *Hegemon* is Greek for "guide, leader." Its implied meaning is one who proceeds first on a path. The feminine form is *Hegemone*. The *Hegemon* is the Guardian of the Threshold of Entrance and Preparer of the Way for the Enterer. He guides the blindfolded candidate through the temple during initiation. From his station slightly east of the center of the hall, and seated between two pillars (at the center of balance between these two opposites), he is the reconciler between Light and Darkness—mediating between the Hierophant and the *Hiereus*. The outer cloak worn by the *Hegemon* is primarily colored white, ornamented with a small black cross. His ritual implement is a miter-headed wand. His lamén symbol is the calvary cross. The Egyptian deity associated with the

Hegemon is Maat, the goddess of justice and balance. This officer also represents the ③=8 grade of Practicus.

Keryx

The title of *Keryx* is Greek for "herald." Its implied meaning is one who announces, calls the meeting to order, and delivers messages. The feminine form is *Kerykissa*. The *Keryx* is the Warder or Watcher within the Temple, who guards the inner side of the door (ideally in the Southwest) from intrusion. He also makes all reports, proclamations, and announcements, and he leads all processions around the Hall. The implements of the *Keryx* are the red lamp and the caduceus staff. His lamen symbol is the caduceus. The Egyptian deity associated with the *Keryx* is Anubis, the jackal-headed god, sometimes referred to as Anubis of the East. This officer also represents the ②=9 grade of Theoricus.

Stolistes

The title of *Stolistes* means "preparer" or "decorator." Its implied meaning is one who sees that all ritual clothing and ornamentation are in readiness. It comes from the root word *stolos*, which indicates preparation of ships for war, by water. The feminine form is also *Stolistes*. This officer is stationed in the northern side of the Hall and is in charge of all regalia and insignia of the temple, making certain that all vestments are ready at the Opening of the Hall. He is also in charge of the ritual purification by water of the Hall, the new candidates, and all Order members. The implement of the *Stolistes* is the cup of water, which he uses to purify the temple by sprinkling water in a prescribed fashion. His lamen symbol is the cup. The Egyptian deity associated with the *Stolistes* is Mut, the mother goddess. This officer also represents the ①=10 grade of Zelator.

Dadouchos

The title of *Dadouchos* is Greek for "torch bearer." In the Eleusinian Mysteries this officer was a woman who held the torch as a symbol of the way by which Demeter searched for her daughter. The feminine form is *Dadouche*. The *Dadouchos* is stationed in the southern side of the Hall,

and is in charge of all of the ritual consecration by fire of the Hall, the new candidates, and all Order members. The implement of the Dadouchos is the censer of incense, which he uses to consecrate the temple by waving the burning incense in a prescribed fashion. His lamén symbol is the swastika or fylfot cross, an ancient emblem of whirling forces. The Egyptian deity associated with the Dadouchos is Neith, a goddess of wisdom and war. Like the Stolistes, this officer also represents the ①=⓪ grade of Zelator.

Phylax

The title of *Phylax* is Greek for "sentinel, guardian." The feminine form is *Phylakissa*. The *Phylax* is the sentinel or Watcher outside the Temple, who guards the outer side of the door (ideally in the Southwest) to keep out intruders. His station is outside the Hall in the Pronaos or antechamber. Anyone seeking admission into the Hall must give the *Phylax* the proper signs and passwords. The implement of the *Phylax* is the sword. His lamén symbol is the all-seeing eye, sometimes depicted as the eye of Horus. The Egyptian deity associated with the *Phylax* is Opowet, a wolf-headed god associated with Anubis and sometimes referred to as Anubis of the West. This officer also represents the ②=⓪ grade of Neophyte.

The Outer Order officers are appointed to serve in their office for a period of six months, from equinox to equinox. The vernal and autumnal equinoxes are a time of perfect balance and equilibrium between the opposing forces of day and night, light and dark. The arrival of either equinox is marked with a special ritual in which the outgoing officers relinquish their stations and regalia, and the newly appointed officers are installed. The temple is magically reconsecrated at this time and the members are given a new password for the ensuing semester.

Initiation as Ritual Drama

The phrase "ritual drama" is an acknowledgement that the earliest Western dramas, the tragedies of classical Greece, most likely evolved from ceremonial performances of sacred rites in the ancient world. Religious

festivals no doubt gave rise to dramatic expression through reenactment of the trials and exploits of the hero or deity at the center of the religion. Such dramas were intended to captivate the senses and tug at the emotions as they retold the sacred legends and delivered important teachings to devout followers. Then, just as now, ritualists employed theatrical props, special effects, symbolism, gestures, speeches, and other elements of performance to have the greatest visual and emotive impact on their audience and to convey the desired message or catharsis of feeling. Centering on the adventures of the gods, these sacred dramas expressed a basic human need to give meaning to the workings of the universe.

In the context of a ritual drama, stories, metaphors, morality tales, myths, and even historic events are presented in an epic fashion and in a prescribed story pattern. In the dramatic tragedies of ancient Greek literature, the story pattern presented usually concerned the manner in which vengeance always followed transgression. In Golden Dawn ritual drama, the story pattern revolves around the themes of purification and sacrifice, the quest for knowledge, adversity followed by victory, order overcoming chaos, death followed by resurrection, and the discovery of secret wisdom at the end of one's journey. The constant recycling of these basic themes not only serves to illustrate the rich literary heritage of Western spirituality, but also to emphasize the most important principles of the Hermetic path.

The primary difference between a theatrical performance and a true ritual drama is that the latter involves techniques of theurgy to manipulate the astral light for a magical end. Regardie described this goal in *The Tree of Life*:

[I]n the case of the dramatic ritual, the method proceeds through an aesthetic appeal to the imagination, depicting in dramatic form the current of major events in the life history of a God, and occasionally the terrestrial cycle of an ideal man or God-man, such as Dionysus, Krishna, Bacchus, Osiris, etc., one who himself attained that wisdom and spiritual plentitude of which the Theurgist likewise is in quest. Living in the atmosphere, created anew, and repeating the deeds performed by the God is a most excellent method for exalting the soul above.⁴

In the ritual drama of initiation, the candidate is both an observer and an active participant in a mythic adventure. He takes on the role of a character in a great mystery play—an actor whose precise actions in the drama are unknown to him, as they unfold as the drama is played out, carefully scripted to have the greatest possible impact on the candidate.

As a school of the Western mysteries, the initiation ceremonies of the Golden Dawn are based on a series of mystery plays or ritual dramas in which the officers reenact specific mythologies that are essential to the Western Esoteric Tradition. These include the spiritual legends of ancient Egypt, as in the story of the Weighing of the Soul in the Hall of Judgment. Additionally, it includes the narratives of the ancient Hebrews, as in the saga of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, the Babylonian/Hebrew story of Yahweh conquering the sea, and the biblical account of the Fall of the Kings of Edom. Also included are the spiritual chronicles of the ancient Greeks, as in the Kabiric mysteries of Samothrace, and, in the higher grades, the allegory of Christian Rosencreutz. Sometimes a particular legend is explained to the candidate while it is being acted out, as in the Zelator ceremony. At other times, the legend is enacted on a purely astral and magical level without the knowledge of the candidate, as in the Neophyte ceremony. Whether or not the candidate is made aware of the narrative drama underlying the ritual, every initiation ceremony is the focus of magical manipulations of the Astral Light intended to help the candidate in his or her quest for spiritual growth.

To effect a psycho-spiritual change in the awareness of the candidate, the ritual officers work as team in an initiation ceremony using the magical methods of the divine theurgy. This is especially true of the presiding officers or Adepts who use the techniques and laws of magic—symbols and correspondences, manipulation of the Astral Light, and the faculties of willpower, visualization, and imagination—to give the ceremony its magical potency. Because of this, it is crucial that a team of initiators be headed by a competent Hierophant. A Golden Dawn initiation ceremony requires that certain magical forces be activated within the candidate's

4. Israel Regardie, *The Tree of Life: An Illustrated Study in Magic* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 2001), 330–331.

sphere of sensation. It is the Hierophant, in whom these forces have been previously activated, who is primarily responsible for the proper transmission of these magical energies into the candidate's aura.

All of the symbols and movements in a Golden Dawn initiation ceremony, including the various signs, grips, gestures, and passwords, are designed to enhance and reiterate the purpose of the ritual—the quest for the Divine Light. Not all of the intricate symbolism is fully comprehended by the candidate, but that makes little difference in the long run, because the inherent value of such symbolism is that it has an autosuggestive effect on the candidate that is perceived at a deep, subconscious level.

In one respect, the candidate is considered somewhat like a newly made talisman, to be purified and consecrated to the higher, divine powers. In the Neophyte ceremony, the officers invoke the Divine Light into the temple and actively work to implant this Light into the candidate's aura. Following this, in the elemental grade initiations of the Outer Order, the officers invoke the divine powers associated with the four elements of earth, air, water, and fire into the candidate's sphere of sensation to effect balance and integration. Finally, in the Portal initiation ceremony, the crowning and guiding element of Spirit is added to the other four, like a capstone that seals the process of elemental unity.

If the entire initiatory process is successful, the candidate will have been given an infusion of divine energy, in the hope that he or she will indeed attain the increased awareness that is needed to exalt the soul and achieve the completion of the Great Work. Although the initiating officers can indeed provide the necessary magical impetus for this end, it is up to the individual candidate to travel the path of initiation "in essence as well as in form."⁵

5. From the Portal ceremony. Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn* (6th ed., St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), 203.

The Psychology of Initiation

In our discussion of magic we often use the term *psyche*, not so much as the classical Greek philosophers used the term to mean the "Lower Soul," but more in line with Carl Jung's use of the term to indicate not only the soul, but also the intellect, the spirit, and the totality of all psychic processes. This includes the two primary divisions of the human psyche: the conscious and the unconscious.

Consciousness is that component of waking awareness perceptible to a person at any given instant. Consciousness is not merely "thinking" but also feeling, will, fantasy, and all other facets of waking life. The ego, or that portion of the psyche that mostly governs thought and behavior, is an important part of consciousness. As a defense mechanism, the ego often creates a false front or outer persona—a mask it presents to the outer world as reality, but which in fact conceals the true nature of the individual.

The unconscious can be further divided into the collective unconscious and the personal unconscious. Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, or the mental patterns and psychic structures that are universally shared by all of humanity, comes very close to Levi's idea of the Astral Light. The impulses and content of the personal unconscious, on the other hand, are unique to the individual. The personal unconscious is the often-cited "trouble spot" of the human psyche, containing all the repressed, forgotten, or rejected memories and impulses that make up the shadow, a type of alter-ego whose unconscious inclinations run opposite to those of the ego. It is often jokingly referred as our "evil twin," although the complexes and neuroses that can be caused by failing to confront the shadow are certainly no laughing matter.

In magic, the shadow is analogous to the *qliphoth* or evil demons, which are the unbalanced, chaotic, and negative aspects that offset the balanced, orderly, and positive aspects of the sephiroth. The qliphoth are often symbolized by the figure of a terrible red dragon. Rather than confronting their own shadow, their own "personal demon," many people project the attributes of the shadow onto someone else. Repressed psychic

material that is not dealt with in an appropriate and healthy fashion will usually leak out in ways that are both unwanted and unhealthy.

The personal unconscious also includes the animus and anima, masculine and feminine soul images. The proper role of either one is to act as a psychopomp or soul guide—the mediator between the conscious and the unconscious. (The role of the soul image is in some ways similar to that of the Holy Guardian Angel in magic.) Unfortunately, many people make the mistake of projecting the image of the animus or anima outward onto someone of the opposite sex, rather than recognizing the soul image as an integral part of themselves.

One of the goals of the initiatory process is integration. This integration takes place on three levels: magical, alchemical, and psychological. All three can be said to involve three stages of progression, the purposes of which are similar, although they overlap in different areas. In magic these stages can be called purification, consecration, and union. In alchemy they are called separation, purification, and cohobation (recombination). In psychology these stages can be called analysis, confrontation,⁶ and individuation (self-realization). These terms are merely different facets of the same goal: to achieve one's highest potential as a human being.

Analytical psychology and magic comprise in my estimation two halves or aspects of a single technical system. Just as the body and mind are not two separate units, but are simply the dual manifestations of an interior dynamic "something," so psychology and magic comprise similarly a single system whose goal is the integration of the human personality. Its aim is to unify the different departments and functions of man's being, to bring into operation those which previously for various reasons were latent. Incidentally, its technique is such that neurotic symptoms which were too insistent upon expression either become illuminated or toned down by a process of equilibration.⁷

6. Confronting the shadow.

7. Israel Regardie, *The Middle Pillar, The Balance Between Mind and Magic* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1998), 5.

The Golden Dawn initiation ceremonies are designed to instill within the candidate an awareness of his or her own divine nature, providing a means by which the candidate may consciously integrate the various components of his or her own psyche. This integration occurs on a magical and alchemical, as well as a psychological, level. The purpose of these ceremonies is to

. . . effect psychological integration, to bring about a psychic release from bondage to unconscious projection, and to produce an exaltation of consciousness to the Light, that any legitimate magical initiating system owes its existence. The function of every phase of its routine, the avowed intention of its principle rituals, and the explicit statement of its teachings is to assist the Candidate by his aspiration to find that unity of being which is the Inner Self, the pure essence of mind. . . .⁸

Thus, the primary objective of the initiation ceremonies of the Golden Dawn is to gradually bring about a higher state of awareness that is essentially twofold: it encompasses the ideas of spiritual illumination and psychological wholeness of being.

In a Golden Dawn initiation ceremony the officers, like Jungian archetypes, represent the various component parts of the candidate's psyche all working together to effect a change in consciousness. Thus, the Keryx symbolizes the candidate's intellectual mind that leads him or her on the path to the Divine Light. He represents the lower part of the reasoning faculties⁹ functioning in obedience to the will. The active will of the candidate is represented by the Hiereus, who protects against evil and imbalance. The Hegemon is analogous to the highest part of the reasoning mind, working in combination with the divine soul. The Hegemon is the aspiring, compassionate, and intuitive consciousness¹⁰ that seeks to bring about the rise of the Light, and the one who guides the candidate along

8. Regardie, *The Philosopher's Stone* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1978), 150-151.

9. In Qabalah, this part of the soul is called the Ruach.

10. The Neshamah.

the way. The presiding officer, the Hierophant, represents the candidate's highest divine self or Higher Genius—that interior nucleus of the psyche that directs all activity and without which no movement is possible. The Hierophant, symbolizing the supreme spiritual soul, is stationed in the east, the place of the dawning sun and the symbolic direction of the heavens. It is through him that the higher powers are brought into the temple.

From one point of view the officers employed in these Rituals represent just such psychic projections. They represent, even as figures in dreams do, different aspects of man himself—personifications of abstract psychological principles inhering within the human spirit. Through the admittedly artificial or conventional means of a dramatic projection of these personified principles in a well-ordered ceremony a reaction is induced in consciousness. This reaction is calculated to arouse from their dormant condition those hitherto latent faculties represented objectively in the Temple of Initiation by the Officers. Without the least conscious effort on the part of the aspirant, an involuntary current of sympathy is produced by this external delineation of spiritual parts which may be sufficient to accomplish the purpose of the initiation ceremony.¹¹

The Three Degrees

There are three degrees in the Golden Dawn system. Although the degrees are often confused with the three Orders, they are not the same and do not overlap the same sephirothic divisions on the Tree of Life.

The First Degree is comprised of the entire First Order, from Neophyte through Philosophus. The First Degree represents a magical stage of purification, wherein the student first dedicates him- or herself to the Hermetic path and begins the process of separating, understanding, and purifying each of the psychic elements. This stage can be likened to the separation period in alchemy and the analysis phase of psychology.

The Second Degree consists of only the Portal grade.¹² This degree represents the magical stage of consecration, wherein the initiate conse-

11. Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 27.

12. Some have mistakenly claimed that the three degrees are identical to the three Orders. However, the Order manuscripts show that the Second Degree is com-

crates the purified elements of the psyche and charges them, as a unified and sanctified whole, to the Great Work. This is comparable to the purification stage in alchemy and the confrontation phase of psychology (although in magic these stages overlap to some extent in the preceding degree).

The Third Degree is composed of the grades belonging the Second Order. This degree represents the magical stage of union, wherein the initiate primes him- or herself for the first, early glimpses of the Higher Self—in preparation for later, more extensive communications with the same. This is equated to the cohobation (recombination) stage in alchemy and the self-realization phase of psychology.

It should be noted that in magic the process of integration is continual and cyclical. The three stages of theurgic integration (purification, consecration, and union) occur over and over again, on a variety of levels, throughout one's magical lifetime.

The Outer Order Grades: The First Degree

The First Order consists of the grades from Neophyte through Philosophus. The grade of Neophyte is a probationary period that is not assigned to a sphere on the Qabalistic Tree of Life, whereas the grades of Zelator, Theoricus, Practicus, and Philosophus are each assigned to one of the four lowest sephiroth on the Tree. The four elemental grades beyond Neophyte represent an understanding of the elements within the psychological and

prised only of the Portal grade. This is clearly stated in the Portal ritual: "The grip of this *Degree* is the Grip of the First Order, but given with the left hand." (Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 216.) This obviously refers *only* to the Portal grade, since the Grip of the Adeptus Minor is completely different. It is also indicated elsewhere in Portal ritual: "This *Degree* is in one sense attributed to Yesod, base of the Path of Probation, Sagittarius." (Ibid., 217.) In addition: "Honored Frater Pharos Illuminans, we are here assembled to open for you the Portal of the Vault of the Adepts, which admits you to the *Second Degree* and brings you to the *Threshold* of the Inner or Second Order." (Ibid., 203.) Italics are ours. Finally, at the end of the Portal ceremony, the aspirant is referred to as "Lord of the Second Degree" (Ibid., 216), a title he could not hold if the Second Degree included the Second Order grades.



Figure 13: Symbols of the elements (from left): fire, water, air, and earth

spiritual makeup of the candidate. These are known as the elemental grades because each is attributed to one of the four elements of fire, water, air, and earth. These elements are symbolized by different triangles (see figure 13). Advancement through these grades is designed to convey to the student an understanding of the four elemental principles of nature. More importantly, the student must learn to realize and balance these four elements as indispensable ingredients of his or her own psychological and spiritual makeup.

As a group the four elemental grades represent the essential work of the Golden Dawn, which is to equilibrate the elemental forces within the psyche of the candidate. These “inner elements” can be characterized as distinct sections of the subconscious mind. In Hermetic philosophy the fourfold pattern is an important model or paradigm that defines the universe—both the greater universe or macrocosm of which we are a part, and the lesser universe or microcosm that is the individual human soul, reflecting the greater universe in miniature.

The earthy portion of the human psyche includes all that is grounding, stable, slow moving, and materializing. It encompasses all activities of productivity, fertility, and growth, and is often said to have passive and feminine qualities.

The airy portion of the psyche consists of all that is intellectual, logical, communicative, expressive, and abstract. It is often described as having active, masculine, and changeable characteristics.

The watery portion of the human psyche is that which is receptive, creative, sustaining, fluidic, subconscious, hidden, mysterious, and generative. This part of the psyche is said to encompass all that is deep and unconscious. It is usually described as passive and feminine.

The fiery portion of the human psyche consists of all that is dynamic, energetic, vitalizing, invigorating, spontaneous, and initiating. It contains all that is transformative, unpredictable, and regenerating. It is described as active and masculine.

The process undertaken by an initiate advancing through the grades is truly an alchemical one; the psychic mechanism of the candidate undergoes a kind of dissolution or separation during the ceremony of the Neophyte. The integral elements are awakened and purified through the elemental grade ceremonies, until at length all of the base components are consecrated and reintegrated back into the psyche of the initiate. A key objective of the First Order could be summed up in the phrase "learn to balance."

The first step is to analyze and awaken the elemental portions of the psyche, for unless their existence is realized, the work of alchemical transformation cannot take place. Through symbol and ceremony, the initiation rites of each grade summon forth the spirits and entities of a particular element. Contact with a specific elemental force produces a kind of magnetic attraction, whereby the corresponding elemental energy is awakened within the aura of the initiate. Only then can further advancement and growth take place. Thus aroused, the elemental portions of the mind may then be consecrated to union with the Higher Self and ultimately to the consummation of the Great Work. This process allows the initiate to bring vast amounts of energy and inspiration from the formerly untapped subconscious depths into the domain of the conscious mind, where it can be utilized for further spiritual growth.

In addition to psychic balance, there is one other important concept that is deeply embedded in all of the grades of the Order—the Divine Light that is the source of all. From the Neophyte grade on, "the whole system has as its objective the bringing down of the Light. For it is by that Light that the golden banner of the inner life may be exalted; it is in

[L]ight where lies healing and the power of growth.”¹³ The elemental grades are concerned with “the analysis of that Light as it vibrates between light and darkness, and with the establishment within the candidate’s personal sphere of the rays of the many-colored rainbow of promise.”¹⁴ The outer and mundane existence through which most human beings stumble throughout their lives is indeed a lifetime of darkness and chaos. Those who have no inner spiritual center live a typical incarnation of selfishness, separation, aimlessness, and bondage to material possessions and the desires of the lower ego. It is no mere coincidence that all the great world religions teach that such a state of existence is contrary to the path of Light and Unity. As the Neophyte is informed during the ceremony of the ①=②: “Long has thou dwelt in Darkness. Quit the Night and seek the Day!”¹⁵

In any given ceremony, the speeches of the officers reveal information appropriate to that grade and its corresponding element. Many of these speeches contain excerpts of ancient invocations, prayers, and wisdom from classic texts of the Western Esoteric Tradition, adding to both the knowledge and ambiance of the ritual.

Throughout all of the grades, students must undertake the task of spiritual integration—assimilating the magical energies gained from each initiation. This often involves the correcting of unbalanced energies and equilibrating between opposing forces until at length harmony is achieved. In analytical psychology, this would be analogous to the process of individuation or the process by which a person becomes self-realized—an indivisible unity or “whole” that contains all aspects of the self.

In addition, the fundamental knowledge of magical principles, correspondences, and symbol systems must be systematically studied, for no aspect of the mystery school is to be neglected. In order to advance from one grade to the next, the student of the First Order must pass a series of examinations on the knowledge lectures, initiation ceremonies,

13. Ibid., 23.

14. Ibid., 24.

15. Ibid., 126.

and general study work that is given to students in each grade. This helps to ensure that students receive a comprehensive grounding in theoretical magic and esoteric philosophy before going on to practice the more advanced techniques of magic.

All of the grades of the Outer Order, in addition, contain important practical formulae of ritual magic, hidden in the text of the ceremonies.

In the Outer Order the student learns magical theory, the basics of Qabalah, astrology, alchemy, and divination. During the course of advancement through the First Order grades, the aspirant must commit to memory a large amount of material, including the names and correspondences of the ten sephiroth and the twenty-two paths of the Tree of Life; the four Qabalistic worlds; the letters and attributes of the Hebrew alphabet and their correlation to the cards of the tarot; the names and attributes of elemental, Qabalistic, planetary, and zodiacal angels and spirits; alchemical symbolism; specific meditations; the attributes of the zodiacal signs; the basics of astrology; and the process of performing divinations using the systems of tarot and geomancy.

As for practical magic, the Outer Order student is given the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram.

The Neophyte Grade

Of all the initiation ceremonies of the Golden Dawn, the Neophyte ceremony stands apart from the rest. The Neophyte grade is called the ①=② grade because it is not attributed to any of the sephiroth on the Tree of Life. This ceremony is a preliminary or probationary rite that contains all the fundamental magical formulae and techniques of the Order. This is a very important point that should not be forgotten. The Neophyte ceremony is based almost entirely around the idea of the Divine Light attracted into the Hall by the presiding officers, and the spiritual magnetism which draws that Light into the temple being implanted in the aspirant's aura or sphere of sensation. The word *Neophyte* comes from the Greek word *neophytos*, or "newly planted."

A prospective candidate must choose a magical motto. A motto is usually a phrase that is descriptive of the candidate's spiritual goal. It is

rendered in Latin, Hebrew, or any language other than the candidate's everyday speech, in order to set the magical name apart from secular life and adopt a spiritual persona when involved in ritual work.

The word *initiation* means literally "to begin." As the first initiation into the Golden Dawn system, the Neophyte grade represents the first conscious step taken by the candidate on his or her quest for the Light. A prospective candidate entering the Neophyte Hall for the first time is in a heightened state of awareness; adrenaline is pumping and the senses are sharpened. All this is brought about by the calculated decision to become an initiate of the mysteries. The candidate is poised to receive an influx of divine energy directed by a skilled team of initiating officers. The importance of the Neophyte grade and its impact on a candidate should never be underestimated.

The mythological narrative or mystery play that serves as the magical backdrop for the Neophyte ceremony is the Egyptian legend of the Hall of Judgment as described in the 125th chapter of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. This depicts the "Weighing of the Soul" in which the deceased (who represents the candidate) is brought into the Hall of Truth by Anubis, the god of the Underworld. After having undergone extensive interrogation and purification, the deceased makes a long, negative confession and is asked to explain the complex symbolism of the Hall. Then the soul of the deceased watches the weighing of its actions on Earth against the Feather of Truth in the mystical scales of Maat. The ibis-headed god Thoth records the judgment as a devouring beast stands ready to seize the soul if the deceased has led an unworthy life. When this ordeal has passed, Horus introduces the deceased to the god Osiris, who sits enthroned within his shrine. Before him is a lotus flower, the emblem of metamorphosis. The deceased is then united with Osiris the Redeemer in an infinite Light.

The Outer Order officers of the Neophyte Hall have been previously described as having many of these same Egyptian deities attributed to them. Thus, the entire story of the Weighing of the Soul can be said to represent the advance and purification of the candidate in the Neophyte Hall. Much of this reenactment of the Egyptian legend of the Weighing of

the Soul actually takes place on a magical and astral level that would not be perceived on the physical level. The candidate, who is blindfolded before entering the Hall, is usually not consciously aware of the intense magical work that takes place during the ritual. The candidate swears to uphold all clauses of the Neophyte obligation (oath) and is led around the Hall to be barred, purified, and consecrated several times, before the mysteries of the grade are revealed. At the end of the rite, the officers and the new Neophyte partake of a mystic repast composed of the four elements—a rose for air, a lighted candle for fire, bread and salt for earth, and wine for water.

In psychological terms, the candidate has made a conscious decision to begin the process of individuation. This process recognizes that both parts of the human psyche, the conscious as well as the unconscious, will be involved.

The constant theme that runs throughout the ceremony is the idea of purification and consecration. The candidate undergoes several instances of purification by water and consecration by fire until he or she arrives at a position of balance within the temple. This is a result of the theurgic teaching that the primary goal of initiatory rites is the purification of the soul—to rid the soul of all that is unbalanced and base so it may become a more fit vessel for the indwelling of the Divine Light.

The Zelator Grade

The Zelator ceremony is the first to truly confer the title of initiate upon the aspirant,¹⁶ symbolically launching his or her initial step onto the Qabalistic Tree of Life. The Zelator grade is called the ①= 10 grade, referring to this important first step onto the tenth sephirah of Malkuth. The Zelator grade lays the foundation for all subsequent elemental transmutations within the aspirant's sphere of sensation. The name *Zelator* comes from the Latin word *zelotes*, for "zealot," which is itself taken from a Greek word *zelos*, or "zeal."

16. One who aspires. A seeker. Another title sometimes used for the initiate.

This is the first of the elemental grades and the element offered for the act of transmutation in this grade is earth—specifically, the earthy part of the initiate's psyche. The only planet assigned to this grade is terra firma, the planet Earth beneath our feet. This is perhaps only one of the reasons why the Zelator grade has such a profound effect on those who attain it. The Zelator ritual is also meant to ground the initiate firmly in the stabilizing element of earth. One of its primary functions is to strengthen the candidate in both mind and body for the difficult work of alchemical transformation that lies ahead. Out of all the elemental grades, the Zelator ritual is often said to be the only true initiation ceremony—the rest being advancements that continue the process started in the ①= 10 grade. This is due to the fact that the Zelator ritual establishes the aspirant firmly in the earth of Malkuth, pictured as the black portion of Malkuth, and the three grades beyond the ①= 10 grade explore the other sub-elements of Malkuth (those portions of Malkuth often pictured in diagrams of the Tree of Life in the colors of citrine, olive, and russet).¹⁷

The mythological narrative that acts as the background for the Zelator ceremony is the ancient Hebrew Tabernacle in the Wilderness described in the Book of Exodus.

Ritual Summary: After the Hall is opened and the forces of elemental earth are invoked, the neophyte is tested on the secrets of the Neophyte grade. The initiate then swears a further oath and is ceremonially brought to two stations—that of evil and that of good. At both of these stations, the Guardians of the Paths repel the unprepared neophyte. The aspirant then takes the Middle Path of Equilibrium, where he or she is again barred by the Guardians, but eventually the way is cleared by the Guardian of the Celestial Soul. It is during this journey along the path of balance that the stabilizing element of earth is established within the aura of the initiate, so that eventually he or she may prove to be a worthy vessel of the Divine Spirit.

17. In colored diagrams of the Qabalistic Tree of Life, the tenth sphere of Malkuth is shown divided into four quarters which are colored citrine, olive, russet and black, representing the air of Malkuth, the water of Malkuth, the fire of Malkuth, and the earth of Malkuth, respectively.

In the next portion of the ceremony the initiate is allowed to enter the sanctuary where he or she symbolically treads the path of a priest of the Hebrew mysteries. The symbolism of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, allegorically the first physical Qabalistic temple in Malkuth, is gradually revealed to the aspirant. This and other symbolism relating to the earth grade are disclosed until finally the earth powers are released.

Symbolism contained in the Zelator ritual foreshadows some very important aspects of the magical/psychological process of integration that is yet to come. This is the first ceremony that exposes the initiate to the concept of the qliphoth, the unbalanced and chaotic forces that are analogous to the shadow in Jungian psychology. Also, one of the diagrams shown to the initiate in this grade is that of the two Kerubim and the Flaming Sword. On a magical level, the male Kerub Metatron and the female Kerub Sandalphon represent the two great universal polarities or opposites, while on a psychological level they represent the archetypal soul images of animus and anima.

The task of a Golden Dawn initiate is not an easy one. The very act of advancing through the grades will accelerate any stresses—physical, spiritual, personal, or psychological—that lie dormant within the aspirant. Any such difficulties or repressed psychic content (shadow material) that arise at this time must be confronted and resolved before taking any further grade initiations.

The ①=10 grade has a reputation as the grade that will separate the wheat from the chaff. Many of those individuals who reach this level, but whose primary motives for getting involved in magic are questionable (escapism, cravings for power over others, the desire for titles or honors, or adherence to the current magical “fad”) will drop out because of the “filter” effect of the Zelator ceremony. All of the elemental grades act to screen out those who cannot bear the task of spiritual transformation, but the main thrust of this filtering effect will be felt in this grade. Israel Regardie often stated that if a magician couldn’t function in the earthy material world of Malkuth, then he had no business attempting to reach the higher realms.

The Zelator grade emphasizes that a firm foundation—a thorough “grounding” in Malkuth—is absolutely essential to the successful work of an initiate. As it states in the Zelator ceremony, “Except Adonai build the house, their labor is but lost that build it. Except Adonai keep the City, the Watchman waketh in vain.”¹⁸

The Theoricus Grade

Once the aspirant has attained the ①=10 grade of Zelator, the groundwork for all ensuing elemental transformation and equilibration within the psyche has been built. In the ②=9 grade of Theoricus, the aspirant takes the second elemental initiation into the ninth sephirah of Yesod on the Qabalistic Tree, and the spiritual/alchemical process of dissolution and integration continues. The title of *Theoricus* is derived from the Greek word *theoricos*, which means “beholder,” “onlooker,” or “observer”—someone who knows only by theory, not by practice.

There is one very important difference between the Zelator grade and the grades of Theoricus, Practicus, and Philosophus. The former initiation established the initial step onto the sphere of Malkuth. The remaining grades (regardless of their respective sephirotic correspondences) are in reality only further steps in the exploration of the four sub-elements of Malkuth. Here, however, the initiate’s focus is not on the grounding qualities of earth, but on the ethereal aspects of air, the highest sub-element in Malkuth and the one most closely aligned with Spirit. As the aspirant is told in the ceremony, “Quit the Material and seek the Spiritual!”¹⁹

Ritual Summary: The narrative drama played out in the Theoricus ceremony is a journey through the underworld wherein the aspirant is led by the Egyptian god Anubis (the Keryx). The Hall is opened and the forces of elemental air are invoked. Then the initiate must prove that he or she has grasped the secrets of the Zelator grade and swear a further oath. Between the Qabalistic spheres of Malkuth and Yesod lies the 32nd Path of Tau, a journey through the subconscious mind and the astral

18. Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 144. (This passage is derived from Psalms 127:1.)

19. *Ibid.*, 156.

plane, which the Zelator symbolically undertakes at this time. On this path, the Zelator is confronted by the four Kerubim, the group of angels assigned to Yesod. These are the angelic powers that rule over the four elements. In the ritual, the Kerubim perform elemental purifications which aid the overall process of alchemic transmutation within the aspirant's psyche. After completing the 32nd Path of Tau, the initiate is shown the tarot card of The Universe and other symbolism. Equilibrium of the elements is constantly stressed in this ceremony.

The latter half of the ritual involves the initiate's entry into the temple of Yesod. During this time the aspirant is shown further symbolism concerning the Garden of Eden and the Theoricus Hall. The secrets of the ②=⑨ grade are divulged, until at length the air powers are released.

The 32nd Path of Tau represents a journey into the netherworld, which in Jungian psychology is itself symbolic of exploring the realm of the unconscious mind.

The element offered for the process of transmutation in this grade is air, or rather the airy portion of the aspirant's psyche.²⁰ The planet assigned to this grade is the moon, the orb of reflected and therefore sometimes illusionary Light. The aspirant approaching this grade had better make certain that he or she has fully assimilated the energies and knowledge of the Zelator grade. If not, the unpredictable astral winds of Yesod might well blow the aspirant off course. Sometimes students will experience the effects of the volatile air grade as a general lack of focus or diminished ability to concentrate on one's studies. (Some have remarked that they "feel like an airhead" in this grade.) Like the previous grade, the ②=⑨ grade is a filter that will screen out individuals who are not well suited to be an initiate of the Hermetic mysteries.

The Practicus Grade

In the ③=⑧ grade of Practicus the aspirant takes the third elemental initiation into the eighth sephirah, Hod, on the Qabalistic Tree, continuing

20. To be even more precise it is the Air of Malkuth in the Qabalistic World of Assiah.

the process of spiritual alchemy within the aspirant's psyche. For the first time, the initiate is faced with the prospect of stepping off the relative safety of the Middle Pillar and onto the Black Pillar of Severity. The Practicus grade thus represents a point in the aspirant's spiritual growth where more weight is theoretically placed on one side of his or her psychic scales of balance.

The title of *Practicus* is derived from the Greek word *practicos* for "practitioner," or "specialist"—one who has knowledge through practice. The element offered for the process of transmutation in this grade is Water, or rather the watery portion of the aspirant's psyche, and Hod is attributed to water.²¹ Interestingly, two fire paths must be traversed before the initiate symbolically reaches the watery sphere of Hod—the paths of Shin (Judgment) and Resh (The Sun), leading to Hod from the sephiroth of Malkuth and Yesod, respectively. Water is considered feminine and fertile, whereas fire is regarded as masculine and stimulating. The union of these two polar opposites is the goal of alchemy and the key to the Great Work.

The dramatic ritual setting in which the events of the Practicus ceremony are allegorically played out is the Greek island of Samos, a place that was in ancient times the center of a widely esteemed Hellenistic mystery religion, the Samothracian Mysteries, which once rivaled the Rites of Eleusis in popularity and reverence.

Many of the speeches in the ③=⑧ grade are symbolically given by the Samothracian Kabiri, but are actually taken from excerpts of W. Wynn Westcott's translation of the *Chaldean Oracles*, a body of work from a later time period than that of the Samothracian Mysteries.

Ritual Summary: The Hall is opened and the forces of elemental water are invoked. Then the aspirant must prove that he or she has grasped the secrets of the Theoricus grade and swear an oath. Between the spheres of Malkuth and Hod lies the 31st Path of Shin, a journey of psychic purification and consecration through elemental fire. On this path, the initiate is confronted by three figures known as the Kabiri—

21. In actuality it is the Water of Malkuth in Assiah.

deities from the Samothracian Mysteries. These figures symbolize the various aspects and attributes of elemental fire. On the path of Shin the Kabiri expose the aspirant to the different energies of fire, which are used to purge the Theoricus of psychic impurities before the water temple is entered. After completing the 31st Path, the aspirant is shown the tarot card of Judgment.

Next, the mysteries of the 30th Path of Resh between Yesod and Hod are revealed to the initiate by the Kabiri, who take on various solar and seasonal aspects. The Path of Resh is a journey of intellectual awareness where the aspirant is exposed to the Higher Powers that have gone into the formation of his or her own personality. Whereas the 31st Path was a journey of purification, the 30th Path is one of consecration. When the journey on the Path of Resh is finished, the aspirant is shown the tarot card of The Sun.

The latter part of the ritual involves the aspirant's entry into the water temple of Hod. During this time the initiate is shown symbolism concerning the Garden of Eden before the Fall and the Practicus Hall. The secrets of the ③=⑧ grade are divulged, until at length, the powers of water are released.

"The Garden of Eden before the Fall" (see figure 14) is an important diagram on many different levels. On a magical level it depicts the various archetypal divisions of the human soul as described by the Qabalists.²² On a psychological level this diagram is one form of what Carl Jung referred to as a uniting symbol. This is described as a symbol that portrays the union of all parts of the psyche, yet its synthesis transcends all of its separate parts. It represents the restored equilibrium between the conscious and the unconscious, and depicts a balanced psychological state that theurgists wish to achieve.²³ The diagram of the Garden of Eden

22. The Neshamah (divine part of the soul), the Ruach (rational mind), and the Nephesh (lower instincts). In this diagram, Adam represents the Ruach, Eve represents the Nephesh, and the great Goddess Aima Elohim represents the Neshamah.

23. Jung described the mandalas of Eastern mysticism as uniting symbols.

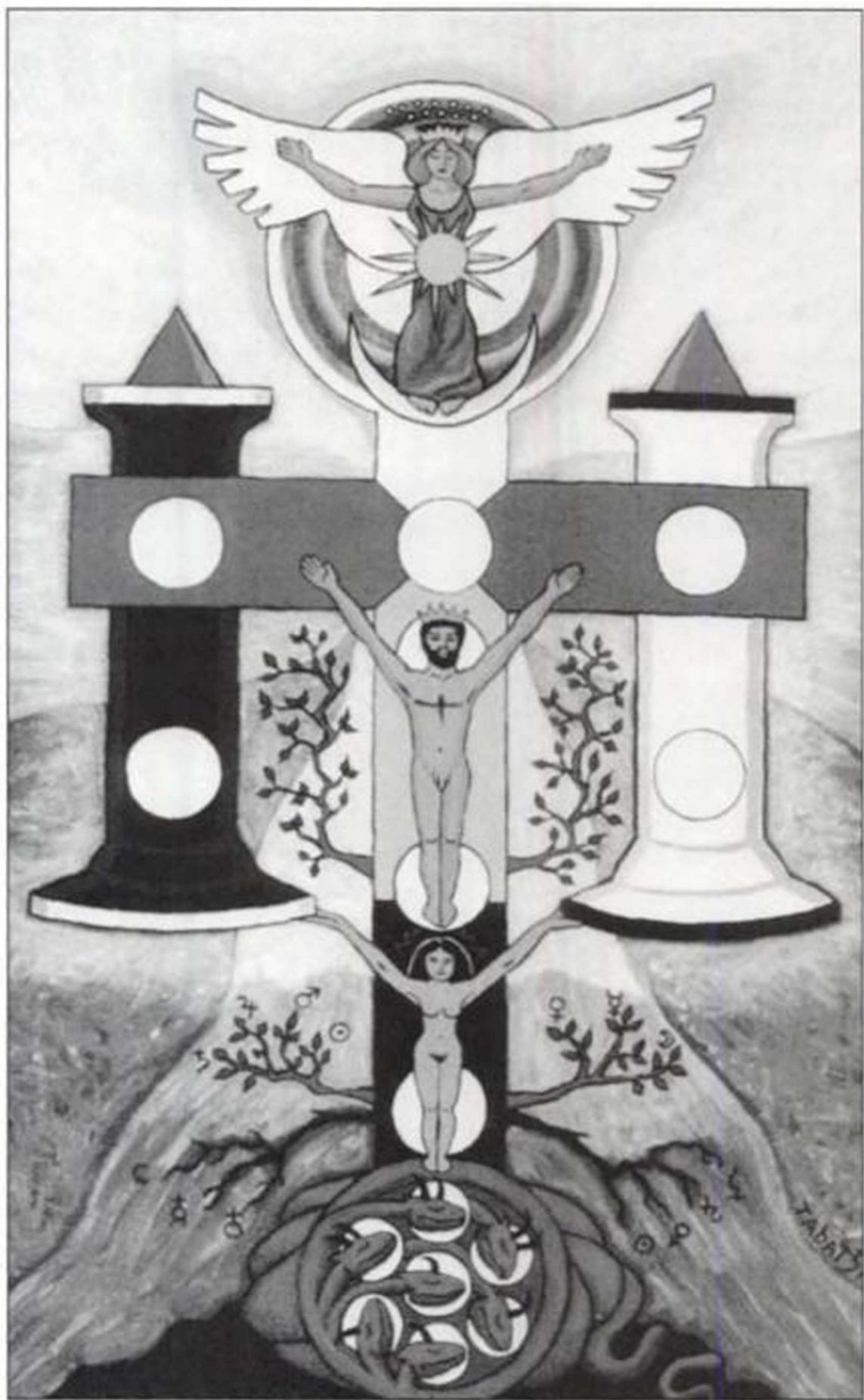


Figure 14: The Garden of Eden before the Fall

before the Fall, (along with its counterpart in the following grade, the Garden of Eden after the Fall), is one of the keys to understanding many of the psychological and spiritual dilemmas that besiege the initiate. In fact, both diagrams taken together can be said to outline the entire Hermetic philosophy. In spiritual terms, we wish to "restore the Garden" to its original state of purity.

As stated earlier, two fiery paths (the thirty-first Path of Shin, attributed to elemental fire, and the thirtieth Path of Resh, corresponding to the heat of the sun) are symbolically traversed in order to arrive at the watery sephirah of Hod. This shows the constant equilibration that is inherent to the Golden Dawn system. Fire and water, the two primary opposing elements, are always counterbalanced one against the other, so that neither is allowed to overpower the energies of the other. Water is maternal and nurturing. Fire is paternal and inseminating. The aspirant is led to the receptive waters of Hod by way of the vitalizing energies of fire. Thus the union of the two is the only possible route to building a firm creative base for spiritual attainment. The waters of intellect must never be allowed to become stagnant and insensitive; they must be ever excited by the passionate fires of emotion.

Initiates of this grade usually experience a sense of ease and relief at having passed through the astral turbulence of Yesod. The nurturing waters of Hod can feel truly comforting to those initiates who have experienced firsthand the harmful effects of an unbalanced, materialistic society. The problem is that students are sometimes reluctant to leave the water temple for the fire grade of Philosophus. There is also an increased awareness of the student's own creative faculties, some of which may have remained dormant until this time. The planet assigned to this grade is Mercury, the orb of the intellect, communication, and expression.

Traditionally, a minimum of three months must be spent in this grade in order to properly digest all of its effects. But, as with all of the grades, more time is usually necessary to fully assimilate the various energies involved.

The Philosophus Grade

In the ④=7 grade the initiate takes the fourth elemental initiation into the seventh sephirah of Netzach on the Tree of Life, advancing the psycho-alchemical process of inner growth. Once again the aspirant deliberately veers off the security of the middle course, this time on the side of the white pillar of Mercy. This action is necessary to balance out the previous initiation that took the aspirant to the black pillar of Severity. The two grade initiations of Practicus and Philosophus compliment and balance each other so completely that it is difficult to adequately describe one without describing the other.

The element offered for the process of transmutation in this grade is fire, and the associated planet is Venus. It is the fiery section of the aspirant's psyche.²⁴ Once again the two primary opposing and parental elements are counterbalanced one against the other so that neither is allowed to overwhelm the other. Two of the paths leading to this grade are watery in nature. Thus, as in the preceding grade the two primary elements of water and fire are both encountered. However, in the ④=7 grade their order and potency are reversed. In the Practicus grade the element of water was predominant. In the Philosophus grade the fire element now swirls in fury, though it is only able to safely manifest upon the complimentary element of water.

The mythological narrative that underlies the Philosophus ceremony is a classic, ancient battle between the forces of order and chaos—between good and evil. It includes the biblical account of the Fall of the Kings of Edom (representatives of the forces of chaos) and the victory of Israel (representatives of the forces of order) in the Book of Genesis.²⁵ The narrative drama also includes the Hebrew story of Yahweh conquering the sea and rivers²⁶—a legend that is itself based on the Babylonian story of the creation of the world and the war between the forces of order and chaos as described in the ancient text known as *Enuma Elish* ("when on high").

24. Fire of Malkuth in Assiah.

25. With supporting literature from the Books of Exodus and Judges.

26. As described in the Books of Psalms and Habakkuk.

Ritual Summary: The Hall is opened and the forces of elemental fire are invoked. Then the Practicus must prove that he or she has grasped the secrets of the Practicus grade and swear an oath. Between the spheres of Malkuth and Netzach lies the 29th Path of Qoph, a journey of psychic evolution and the conquering of fears and illusions. On this path, the initiate is confronted by the three Egyptian deities of Osiris, Horus, and Isis. These figures symbolize the various attributes of elemental water and the different aspects of time. After completing the 29th Path, the aspirant is shown the tarot card of The Moon.

Next, the mysteries of the 28th Path of Tzaddi between Yesod and Netzach are revealed to the aspirant by a different triad of Egyptian deities: Isis, Nephthys, and Hathor. These goddesses allegorically expose the initiate to the different aspects of Celestial Water—the Waters of Creation and the Waters of Life—the principle of potential. The Path of Tzaddi is a journey of intuitive awareness, where the student learns how to tap into the deep well of knowledge within the subconscious mind through meditation and imagination. A further description from the *Chaldean Oracles* on the Monad, Duad, and Triad is revealed to the aspirant. When the journey on the Path of Tzaddi is finished, the initiate is shown the tarot card of The Star.

The mysteries of the 27th Path of Peh between the spheres of Hod (intellect) and Netzach (emotion) are then revealed to the aspirant. This is a martial path that unveils the biblical story of the death of the Kings of Edom (chaos). The Path of Peh is a difficult but very necessary journey that includes the fiery destruction of the old and outmoded in favor of the new. It is the symbolic removal of all that is base, low, and selfish within the mind of the aspirant in favor of that which is spiritual. This journey symbolizes the beginning phase of the reconstruction of the initiate's psyche. When the pilgrimage on the Path of Peh is completed, the aspirant is shown the tarot card of The Tower.

The later part of the ritual involves the aspirant's entry into the temple of Netzach. During this time the initiate is shown symbolism concerning the Garden of Eden after the Fall as described in the Book of Genesis, and the Philosophus Hall itself. The secrets of the ④=7 grade are disclosed, until at length the Powers of Fire are released.

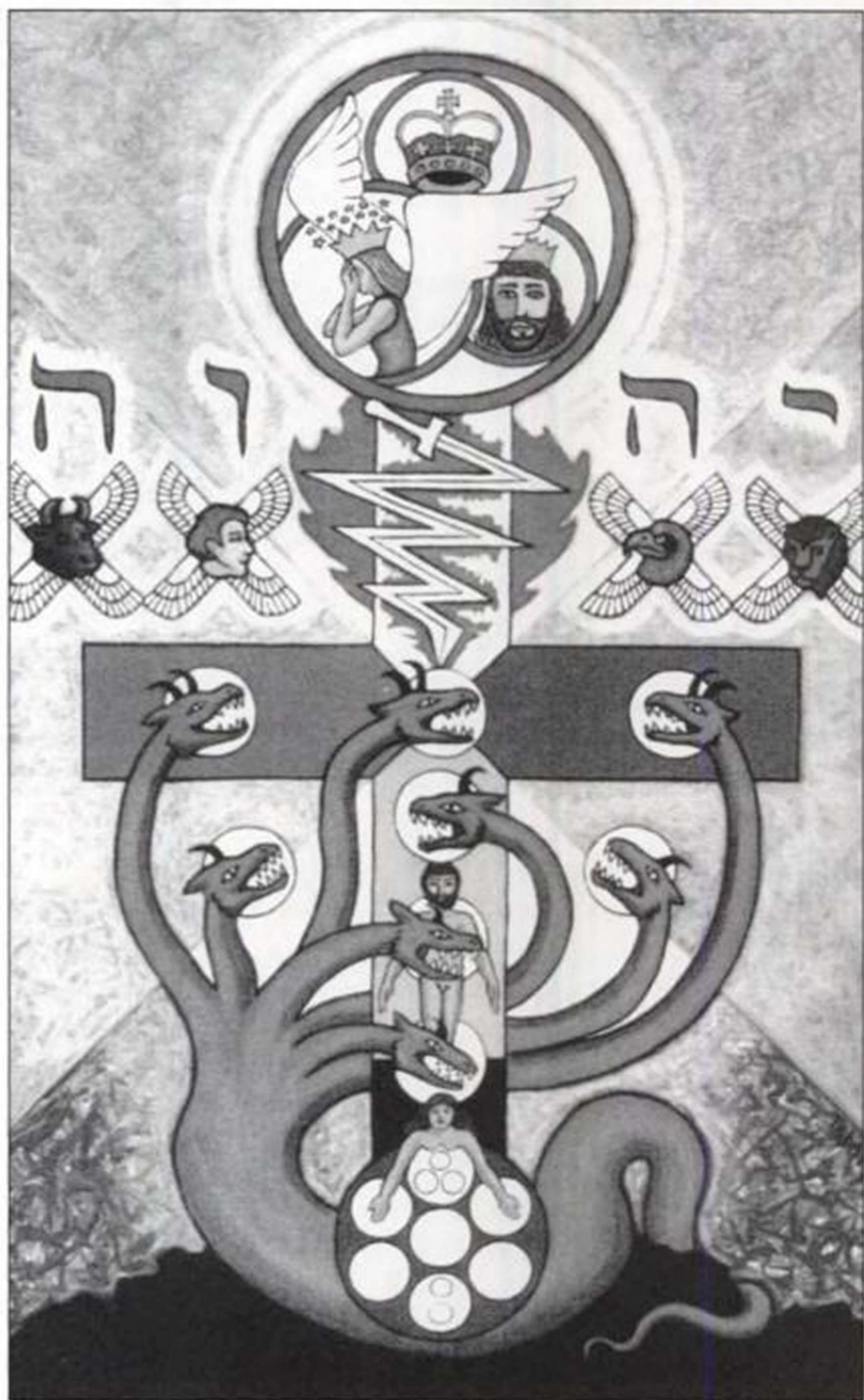


Figure 15: The Garden of Eden after the Fall

The name bestowed upon an initiate of this grade, Philosophus, is based on the Greek word *philosophos*, which means "lover of wisdom." There is much to be learned in this grade, especially about one's self. It takes a true lover of wisdom to endure the rigors of this grade and be able to examine one's personal habits, biases, reactions, idiosyncrasies, and deepest beliefs with an open mind and an honest heart.

Amongst initiates, the Philosophus is well known as a difficult grade to get through. The harshness of this grade is due to the stimulating effect of the interplay between fire and water, at times working against each other and at other times harmonizing with each other. Although these elements have the power to call forth the most sublime parts of the soul, they also have the power to evoke that which is lowly and coarse. The terminating point of the grade is the sphere of Netzach, the seat of the emotions. Consequently, one of the characteristics of this grade is mood swings. The result is a period of turmoil that is well known to mystics and initiates. At times "the whole universe, under the stimulation of the magical elements and inward analysis, seems to tumble like a pack of cards crazily about one's feet."²⁷ However unpleasant this experience may seem to the student, progress is indeed being made: "the criterion or hallmark of successful initiation is the occurrence of these or similar experiences."²⁸ It is this interplay of opposites that brings to the aspirant an awareness of the dysfunctional and unbalanced state of his or her normal daily existence, as well as the psychic mess that results from spiritual ignorance. There is only one way out of this disquieting state, and this is shown forth in the tarot card of The Tower. The Philosophus must tear down the old crooked tower of outmoded beliefs and obsolete habits and rebuild the tower, brick by brick, on a firm spiritual foundation. From the ruins of the old temple of darkness are erected the new temple of Light.

In psychological terms, the meaning of the Path of Peh and the diagram of the Garden of Eden after the Fall (see figure 15) are crystal clear. The red dragon of the Qliphoth has been awakened from its slumber—it

27. Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 32.

28. Ibid.

risks to threaten the stability of the entire Tree of Life. This is the long-dreaded confrontation with the shadow—those unconscious, unresolved, and often unwanted aspects of the self that have been buried or ignored by the conscious mind. Confronting the shadow head-on is a tumultuous and often unpleasant experience, but a very necessary one. One result of this confrontation is the dissolution of the false self, the mask or persona—an experience superbly symbolized by the destruction of the Tower, as shown in the tarot card.

One of the lessons of this grade is that the two elements of fire and water, when sensibly directed and creatively engaged, can lead to the reconstruction of the Garden of Eden to its original state of perfection. The Divine Light cannot dwell within the human psyche until chaos and disorder has been transformed into the harmony of total realization and illumination. Human beings cannot claim their birthright of inner calm and spiritual tranquility until the Garden is restored. Order and balance must be returned to Creation, the holy spheres of which are mirrored in our own souls. “Not until order has been restored to the lower elements of his earthly kingdom, neither peace nor inner security may be his [man’s] rightful lot.”²⁹

The ④=⑦ grade is highest grade of the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn, and a bare minimum of seven months must be spent in this grade in order to properly digest all of its effects.

The Portal: The Second Degree

The Portal grade is a probationary period that exists between the First and Second Orders. In the Portal Ritual, the aspirant is introduced to the fifth and final element of Spirit, thus completing the component parts of his or her elemental constitution.

The Portal ceremony is unlike any of the previous rituals, and there are a number of aspects that are unique to it. Whereas all of the Outer Order grades represent what the strictest interpretation of the Golden Dawn calls the First Degree, the Portal alone is referred to as the Second Degree.

29. Ibid., 31.

This is also the first time throughout all of the initiations that the aspirant is formally presented with the white Pillar of Mercy. Up until this point, the initiate has been working with the black Pillar of Severity, which represents the entire Outer Order. A primary theme in the Portal ceremony is the aspirant's coming out of darkness into the Light. Only after the darkness of the black pillar (i.e., the initiate's lower personality symbolized in the elemental grades) has been explored and synthesized can the white pillar be safely approached.

The Portal grade is not assigned to any one sephirah, although it may be considered as an outer court of Tiphareth.³⁰ This is why there are no symbolic numbers, such as ①=10, to describe it. Moreover, this grade is especially referred to as the Veil of Paroketh, a boundary that exists between the lowest four sephiroth and the rest of the spheres on the Tree of Life. This time the aspirant is brought back squarely to the Middle Pillar and the Way of Balance, for it is only by the middle path of equilibrium that the veil into the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies may be rent.

Previous grades involved the alchemical processes of analysis and dissolution wherein the initiate was forced to examine his or her own chaotic inner workings. This included a kind of alchemical exorcism, if you will, of inner conflicts and the purging of any excess psychic baggage. If the aspirant has honestly and diligently pursued the work of introspection and psychic balance that is the core work of the Golden Dawn at this level, then it is assumed that the initiate who has successfully completed the Philosophus grade is ready to begin the alchemical process of assimilation wherein the purified portions of the aspirant's elemental self are exalted by an infusion of the Light-giving Spirit and recombined into a balanced "whole" that is greater than the sum of its parts. This is the second half of the *solve et coagula* formula, where the sublimated elements begin to coagulate into a more balanced psyche that is consecrated to the work of the Divine Will. This not only makes a higher level of spiritual growth possible, it eventually leads to the goal of the alchemists—the procurement of the Philosopher's Stone.

30. The four previous grades referred to the sub-elements of Malkuth in Assiah. The Portal grade emphasizes Yesod of Yesod in Assiah.

The element encountered in this grade is the fifth and final element of Spirit, often called the Quintessence or "fifth essence." This is the guiding spiritual essence within the aspirant's psyche that transcends all of the Qabalistic realms. The Spirit portion of the human psyche encompasses all that is transcendental, universal, enduring, pure, and divine.

Spirit is the crowning element that forms the uppermost point of the pentagram, ruling above the elements of fire, water, air, and earth, and announcing the dominion of the Divine Light ruling over and permeating all of Creation. So, too, does the Portal grade crown the previous elemental grades. Spirit is the cornerstone of the magical tradition. Until the aspirant receives an influx of this sublime element, all magical workings undertaken will be undermined to a lesser or greater extent due to the fact that they will be under the governance of the ego rather than the guidance of the Higher Self.

Some of the officers in the Portal ceremony are the same as in the previous grades; however, some are not. There is an unusual mixture of both Outer Order and Inner Order officers present in this grade. The Hierophant has been replaced by the Chief Adept, who is assisted by officers known as the Second and Third Adepts. The only Outer Order officers present are the Hieres and the Hegemon. In the traditional scheme of the Golden Dawn, the Portal grade occupies a position "between the worlds," so to speak—between the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn and the Inner Order of the R. R. et A. C. It partakes of both, and yet is a part of neither. This is precisely why the Portal grade is considered a separate degree.

The primary theme of the Portal ceremony is alchemical and transformative. The aspirant is the subject of an alchemical transmutation from "lead to gold" or from the dross to the sublime. The Portal Hall is symbolic of the alchemist's laboratory, and the initiate is the base matter that will be transformed and sublimated to the higher.

Ritual Summary: The Hall is opened and the forces of all four elements are invoked by the presiding officer, assisted by the other officers. After this the forces of the supreme element of Spirit are invoked. The Philosophus enters and is made to swear to further oaths and obligations.

Then the initiate must prove that he or she has grasped the secrets of all the preceding grades. Several diagrams and tarot cards are explained.

During the next part of the ceremony, the aspirant is required to invoke the powers of the four elements with the aid of the officers. The elements, symbolized by rose petals for air, burning incense for fire, a cup of water, and a platter of salt for earth, are ritually purified. These elemental items also represent the various components of the initiate's psyche or, as they are referred to in the ritual, "the purified powers of [the aspirant's] body." The Portal grade equilibrates all the various portions of the aspirant's elemental self, which are symbolically sacrificed on the mystical altar beyond the Veil of Paroketh, and offered to the service of the Higher and Divine Genius. The secrets of the Portal grade are disclosed, until at length the powers of all five elements are released.

This grade not only emphasizes the Quintessence or Spirit, it takes the alchemical process one step further by focusing on specific alchemic symbolism to drive the point home. The Second and Third Adepts in this ritual bear wands that are surmounted by the alchemical symbols of sulfur and salt, respectively. The Chief Adept bears a wand surmounted by a pentagram to represent collectively the three Alchemic Principles of salt, sulfur, and mercury (body, soul, and spirit). This points out that spirit is more than the union of the four elements—it is that which contains the three Alchemical Principles hidden in nature. After taking this initiation it is the duty of the aspirant to expand upon these three Alchemical Principles as they exist within, to separate them from their base matter, and to engage and comprehend them fully within the consciousness.

In psychological terms, all the officers in the Portal ritual take on the role of animus or anima. All act as psychopomp, guiding the initiate through the various points of the ceremony.

The Portal grade is symbolically a time of gestation—a period of transmutation wherein it is hoped that the base matter is turned to gold, the cocooned worm transformed into a butterfly, and the aspiring student transmuted into a true initiate of the mysteries.

Traditionally nine months is spent in this grade, during which time the aspirant reviews all the study material of the preceding grades—



Figure 16: Alchemical symbols of the Portal Grade

recapitulating their various energies, in addition to organizing and balancing all portions of the elemental self, which are symbolically surrendered to the Will of the Divine.

The Inner Order: The Third Degree

In a strict sense, the Second Order is not technically a part of the Golden Dawn. It is a separate Order, the *Ordo Roseae Rubae et Aureae Crucis*—the “Order of the Red Rose and Golden Cross.” This Order, quite distinct from the Golden Dawn, is comprised of the Adept grades—Adeptus Minor ⑤=⑥, Adeptus Major ⑥=⑤, and Adeptus Exemptus ⑦=④. In an Order setting, admission into these higher grades is by invitation only, and is usually open only to individuals who pass the requisite examinations and are selected on other qualifying factors, such as how well they have completed and assimilated the work of the Outer Order.

This is the Order where the real work of ceremonial magic begins. Whereas the First Order is a school that teaches students the fundamentals of magic, the Second Order is where the student puts what he or she has learned to practical use. In the R. R. et A. C., initiates perform ceremonial magic. They build and consecrate their own magical tools, write and perform their own rituals based on traditional Golden Dawn formulas, practice techniques of skrying and astral traveling, create and assume the images of godforms, and perform advanced magical techniques. Many difficult procedures of magic have to be carefully learned and certain fundamental rituals must be committed to memory.

The Second Order is essentially rooted in the principles of Rosicrucianism, a spiritual philosophy founded on the life of Christian Rosencreutz or “Christian of the Rosy Cross,” also known as C. R. C., the allegorical founder of the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross. The myth of Christian Rosencreutz is itself an allegory of the life of Christ, and this is the primary ritual drama of the Second Order. The Rosicrucian brotherhood was rumored to be a secretive order of initiates who studied alchemy, Qabalah, astrology, magic, and Christian mysticism. Stories of the brotherhood began to surface in Europe around 1614.

In 1892, MacGregor Mathers firmly established the ideals and ethos of Rosicrucianism into the R. R. et A. C. when he finished the elaborate initiation ceremony into the ⑤=⑥ grade of Adeptus Minor. Based on the legend of Christian Rosencreutz, this ritual involves the discovery of C. R. C.'s tomb—known as the Vault of the Adepti. An account of this chamber, along with its contents, make up some of the most vital portions of the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614), one of the three most famous Rosicrucian Manifestos. In the allegory of the *Fama*, the life and works of Christian Rosencreutz are recounted, as well as the essential portrayal of his burial chamber. It was this description that MacGregor Mathers brilliantly drew upon in his creation of the Vault of the Adepti. A complete description of the Vault and relevant passages from the *Fama* can be found elsewhere, so there is no need to recount them here.³¹

The Mystical Vault is the primary temple and ritual chamber of the Second Order, and all grade initiations performed by R. R. et A. C. require it. This seven-sided temple is recharged once every year on or around the day of Corpus Christi, the one day of the year when the ceremony of the Consecration of the Vault of the Adepti is performed. Corpus Christi means, of course, "the Body of Christ." This Catholic feast day, held in honor of the Eucharist, falls on a different day each year, owing to the fact that it is celebrated a certain number of days after Easter.³² This tradition, adopted by the Second Order, was undoubtedly started by the early Rosicrucians, who referred to Corpus Christi secretively as "Day C."

Although some have suggested that the Consecration of the Vault of the Adepti marks the date of the summer solstice, the traditional date of the ceremony is determined by the feast day of Corpus Christi, which can fall anywhere from the end of May to the end of June. In fact, the Order does not ritually observe the solstices, only the equinoxes; the times when

31. See our book *Creating Magical Tools*, pages 211–223, for more information.

32. The Feast of Corpus Christi of the Western Christian Church celebrates the presence of the body (corpus) of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. A movable holiday, it is observed on the Thursday (or, in some nations, the Sunday) after Trinity Sunday. In the fifteenth century it became the principal feast of the church, where mystery and miracle plays were a prominent feature of the celebration.

day and night are equal in length, alluding once more to the Middle Pillar and the balanced disposition of opposing forces.

Ritual Summary: The mythological setting for the Adeptus Minor ceremony is the reenactment of the death and resurrection of Christian Rosencreutz. In the highly eloquent ceremony of the Adeptus Minor, the temple is opened by the officiating Adepts. The aspirant enters, announces his desire to be admitted into the vault, and is rebuffed. Then the initiate is sent to the antechamber where he or she is divested of all insignia before returning to undertake an arduous period of trial and tribulation, including a symbolic crucifixion accompanied by the recitation of a potent and binding obligation. After this, the legend of Christian Rosencreutz is recounted to the aspirant. In due course, the door to the vault is opened and the initiate is admitted into the mystical seven-sided tomb to discover the body of C. R. C., represented by the presiding officer. The secrets of the vault, including its elaborate symbolism, are explained before the final close of the ceremony.

The ⑤=⑥ ceremony is often an awe-inspiring experience to those who have undergone it. According to Arthur Edward Waite, the ritual was quite impressive:

It could not be denied that the culminating Grade, as the system was then developed, had the root matter of a greater scheme than had ever dawned in the consciousness of any maker of Masonic degrees under any Grand Lodge or Chapter, Conclave or Preceptory, in the whole wide world.³³

One of the principle goals of the ⑤=⑥ grade, and indeed the entire Second Order, is summed up in the one of the clauses of the Adeptus Minor obligation:

I further solemnly promise and swear that, with the Divine permission, I will from this day forward apply myself to the Great Work, which is to so purify and exalt my spiritual nature that with the

33. Waite, *Shadows of Life and Thought* (Kila, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing Co.), 161.

Divine aid I may at length attain to be more than human and thus gradually raise and unite myself to my higher and divine Genius, and that in this event, I will not abuse the great power entrusted to me.³⁴

Striving to be “more than human” does not mean becoming a super-human demi-god. Rather, it means trying to become the best possible human one can be, by learning how to use one’s latent psychic/magical gifts for inner development, and striving to overcome the obstacles and inertia that daily life routinely throws into the path of spiritual seekers.

Many people often make the mistake of thinking that taking an initiation into the ⑤=⑥ grade brings with it an immediate change of consciousness, full “knowledge and conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel,” total communication with the Higher Self, and instantaneous self-realization on all levels of awareness. If only spiritual enlightenment were that easy! There would never be any reason to advance any further in the work if this were so. Entry into the Neophyte Adeptus Minor sub-grade is just the beginning of the work of the Second Order. The initiate has become a Neophyte again—on a different level. As we have already pointed out, the process of magical integration is continuous and cyclical. This is only the beginning of a new phase of union, alchemical cohobation, and psychological self-realization. It is a process that will occur over and over again, on many different levels.

The work of the Adeptus Minor grade is so extensive that it requires a minimum of six years to complete. In fact a majority of the practical magical work of the Order, including Qabalistic magic, consecration of talismans, assumption of godforms, and Enochian magic, is covered in the ⑤=⑥ grade. A summary of this work is contained in chapter 6.

In a book that is designed for beginners, there is no need to expound upon the grades of Adeptus Major or Adeptus Exemptus. These grades are only assumed after a long period of time spent achieving true balance in the Tipharetic sub-grades of Adeptus Minor. Respectively, the ⑥=⑤ and ⑦=④ grades entail taking on the roles of spiritual warrior and master magician. These roles include serious responsibilities involving battle

34. Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 230.

and resolution with the Qliphotic forces of chaos, and making final magical preparations to pass beyond the Abyss at the end of one's present incarnation. We will not address these issues here. To use Regardie's words:

[I]t is impossible for the ordinary individual to understand those (grades) above the grade of Adeptus Minor, and individuals who lay claim openly to such exalted grades, by that very act place a gigantic question mark against the validity of their attainment. He that is exalted is humble.³⁵

For the purposes of this book, we need not delve any further into the higher grades of the Second Order.

The Third Order

The Third Order is a purely theoretical one. It consists of the grades corresponding to the highest spheres of Binah, Chokmah, and Kether on the Tree of Life: Magister Templi ⑧=③, Magus ⑨=②, and Ipsissimus ⑩=①. These grades are not attained by living persons, although in some groups individuals occasionally claim to hold these high degrees honorarily. No one in the Golden Dawn system can hold them in actuality.

At this juncture, we draw to a close our description of the hierarchical structure and grade system of the Golden Dawn and open a new chapter for discussion.

35. Ibid., 21.



Golden Dawn Rituals

All ceremonies, consecrations, ablutions, and sacrifices are prayers in action, and are symbolic formulas; and they are the most potent prayers because they are translations of word into action, showing will power and persistence, seeing that they require more constrained attention than silent prayer, or prayer expressed in words; and so they constitute real work, and such work demands a man's whole energy.¹

The initiation ceremonies of the Golden Dawn are certainly among the most powerful rituals created for the Order system. However, the First or Outer Order of the Golden Dawn was designed to be a school where students learned the ABCs of magic before performing practical magic. Traditionally, only one magical ritual was ever given to Outer Order students for their own personal use—the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram. There are two forms of this ritual, one for invoking energies and one for banishing. Respectively, they are the Lesser Invoking Ritual of the Pentagram (LIRP) and the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP). A banishing ritual is designed to get rid of unwanted spiritual energies. It is often performed as a prelude to more complex rituals, to “clear” the area beforehand. An invoking ritual has the opposite effect—it is designed to call spiritual forces into the temple space.

1. Eliphas Levi, *The Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum* (Kila, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing Co.), 3.

The Golden Dawn manuscripts advocated performing the invoking form of this ritual in the morning and the banishing form at night. However, we feel that the beginning student needs to concentrate solely on the banishing form for a period of a few months, since beginners have a tendency to light up on the astral and unknowingly attract all manner of elementals and low levels of astral energies. Also, it is far more important to know how to banish rather than to invoke. Anyone can attract low spiritual energies. Getting rid of the same can be more difficult.

The Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram opens and closes with the Qabalistic Cross, a simple rite that can be considered a complete ritual by itself.

The Qabalistic Cross (QC)

Stand and face east. Imagine a brilliant white light touching the top of your head. Reach up with the index finger or blade of a dagger to connect with the light and bring it to the forehead.

Touch the forehead and vibrate "Atah" (*ah-tah*, meaning "Thou art").

Touch the breast and bring the dagger blade or index finger down until it touches the heart or abdominal area, pointing down to the ground. Imagine the light descending from the forehead to the feet. Vibrate "Malkuth" (*mal-kooth*, meaning "the Kingdom").

Touch the right shoulder and visualize a point of light there. Vibrate "Ve-Geburah" (*veh-ge-boor-ah*, meaning "the Power"). Touch the left shoulder and visualize a point of light there. See the horizontal shaft of light extending from the opposite shoulder to join this point of light. Vibrate "Ve-Gedulah" (*veh-ge-doo-lah*, meaning "the Glory").

Imagine a completed cross of light running from head to feet and shoulder to shoulder.

Bring the hands outward, away from the body, and finally bring them together again, clasped on the breast as if praying. Vibrate "Le-Olahm, Amen" (*lay-oh-lahm*, meaning "Forever, unto the Ages").

The Qabalistic Cross is a potent little rite that establishes a cross of Divine Light within the aura of the practitioner. The gestures given are similar to the Christian Cross, and the words are taken from the last few phrases of

the Lord's Prayer, which is in turn based on a Qabalistic Hebrew original.² The Cross is Qabalistic because it is associated with the sephiroth of Kether, Malkuth, Geburah, Chesed, and Tiphareth, which are activated in the aura by the various gestures and visualizations. The Qabalistic Cross fortifies the aura and establishes balance within the psyche. Continued repetition of this simple ritual alone will bring a measure of equilibrium and calm.

The Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP)

Face east and perform the Qabalistic Cross.

Use a banishing dagger or the index finger of the right hand to trace a large Lesser Banishing Pentagram. Thrust the dagger tip or index finger through the center of the pentagram and vibrate "YHVH." (*Yod-heh-vav-heh*. Keep the right arm extended throughout, never let it drop. The pentagrams should be visualized in a flaming blue or white light.)

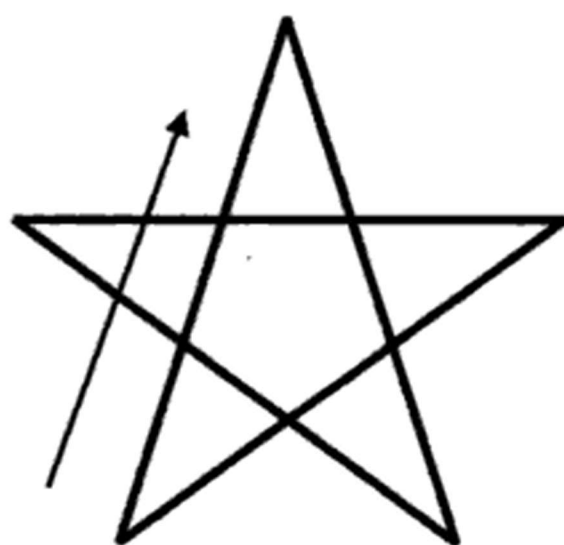


Figure 17: Lesser Banishing Pentagram

Turn and walk clockwise to the south and trace the same pentagram there. Charge the figure as before, intoning "Adonai" (*ah-doh-nye*). Go to

2. See Regardie's *The Middle Pillar: The Balance Between Mind and Magic* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1998), 179–180.

the west and trace the same pentagram. Charge it with "Eheieh" (*eh-hey-yay*). Go to the north and draw the same pentagram, this time intoning the word "Agla" (*ah-gah-lah*).

Keep the arm extended. Walk back to face the east. Extend both arms out in the form of a Tau cross (T-shape) and say, "Before me, RAPHAEL" (*Rah-fah-yel*). Visualize before you the great archangel of elemental air rising out of the clouds, dressed in flowing yellow and violet robes, and carrying a caduceus wand.

Behind you, visualize another figure and say, "Behind me, GABRIEL" (*Gah-bree-el*). See the winged archangel of elemental water stepping out of the sea like the goddess Venus, dressed in robes of blue and orange, with cup in hand.

To your right you see another winged figure, the archangel of elemental fire, dressed in flaming red and green robes, wielding a mighty sword. Say, "On my right hand, MICHAEL" (*Mee-kah-yel*).

See another great winged archangel of elemental earth at your left, who rises up from the vegetation of the ground in earth-toned robes of citrine, olive, russet, and black, holding stems of ripened wheat. Say, "On my left hand, URIEL" (*Ur-ee-el*).

Then say, "For about me flames the pentagram, and in the column shines the six-rayed star."

Repeat the Qabalistic Cross as in the beginning.

In addition to its reputation as one of the best methods for banishing unwanted energies and cleansing the temple space, this simple yet powerful ritual can be used as a protection against the impure magnetism of others. It is also a way to rid oneself of obsessing or disturbing thoughts. Give a mental image to your particular thought or disturbance and visualize it before you. Project it out of your aura with the Projection Sign, and when it is away from you, prevent its return with the Sign of Silence (see next page). Then imagine the form in the east and perform the LBRP. See the unwanted energy form dissolving on the outside of your ring of flaming pentagrams.

In a small space the magician can simply stand and turn in place to draw the pentagrams in the respective quarters. In a larger temple setting, the magician may perform the Qabalistic Cross just west of the altar facing east, but should then go to the eastern part of the temple and walk around the perimeter of the room to trace the pentagrams. The magician may also choose to start in the east of the temple, and return to the east for the final part of the ritual.

Interested readers can find a great deal more information on the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram in the annotated third edition of Israel Regardie's classic text, *The Middle Pillar: The Balance Between Mind and Magic*.

Magical Gestures

Specific gestures are made by Golden Dawn magicians as symbols of one's rank or grade. However, these same gestures are also used for invoking, projecting, or curtailing specific energies. The following gestures are both associated with the grade of Neophyte.

The Projection Sign

The Projection sign of a Neophyte is also called "the Saluting Sign" or "the Sign of the Enterer." This gesture can be used to project energy outward or forward.

First bring the arms up above the crown of your head, then bring the hands down to either side of the head at eye level (fingers pointing forward, hands held flat with palms down). Then step forward with the left foot, at the same time thrust the arms directly forward to their full length, keeping the eyes level with the outstretched hands as if you were looking between the thumbs at an area in directly in front of you.

The Sign of Silence

The Sign of Silence is also called "the Sign of Protection." This gesture usually follows the Projection Sign and is used to keep a reflux current of energy set in motion by the previous sign from returning back to the magician, especially through the mouth, the orifice of invocation.

Bring the left foot back sharply, both heels together—stamp the ground once with the left foot as it is placed beside the right. At the same time bring the left hand to the mouth and touch the center of the lower lip with the left forefinger. Close the other fingers and thumb. Drop the right hand to the side.

The Lesser Invoking Ritual of the Pentagram (LIRP)

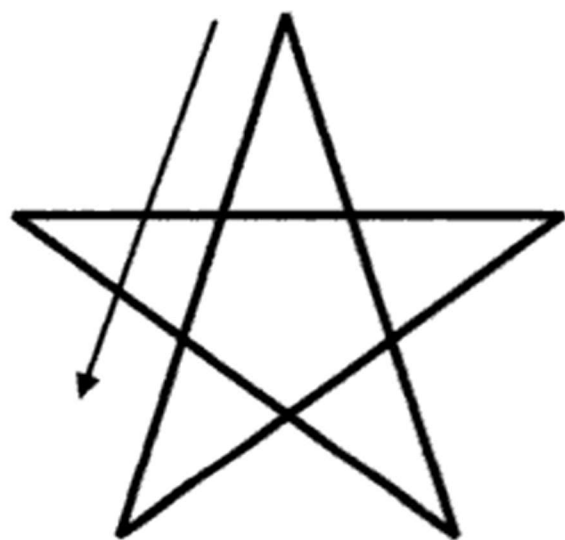


Figure 18: Lesser Invoking Pentagram

The Invoking form of the Lesser Pentagram Ritual is virtually identical to the Banishing form. Both commence and end with the Qabalistic Cross and both invoke the archangels. The only difference is that the LBRP uses the Lesser Banishing form of the Pentagram, whereas the LIRP uses the Lesser Invoking Pentagram.

The Invoking form of the Pentagram Ritual is designed to stir up and invoke the elemental energies into the magician's temple.

The Rituals above are the only ones that would have been utilized by Outer Order students of the Golden Dawn a century ago. However, our own students are encouraged to perform one other ritual that was originally taught in the Portal grade and above. This is the Exercise of the

Middle Pillar, which activates the central equilibrating sephiroth in the magician's aura. Israel Regardie strongly advocated this exercise to all seekers, regardless of grade or rank, because he considered it crucially important for maintaining psychic balance and inner peace.

The Exercise of The Middle Pillar

Establishing the Pillar

(This exercise can be performed either standing, sitting, or lying down.) After a few minutes of relaxation, imagine a sphere of white light just above your head. Vibrate the name "Eheieh" (*Eh-hey-yay*, meaning "I am"). Keep vibrating this word until it is the only thought in your conscious mind. Then imagine a shaft of light descending from your Kether (crown) center to your Daath center at the nape of the neck.

Form a sphere of light at the Daath (neck) center. Vibrate the name "YHVH Elohim" (*Yode-heh-vav-heh El-oh-heem*, meaning "the Lord God"). Intone the name until it is the only thing in your conscious mind.

Bring a shaft of light down from the Daath center to the Tiphareth center around your heart. Form a sphere of light there. Vibrate the name "YHVH Eloah ve-Daath" (*Yode-heh-vav-heh El-oh-ah v'-Dah-ath*, meaning "Lord God of Knowledge") several times until it fills your consciousness.

See the shaft of light descending from the Tiphareth (heart) center into the Yesod center in the groin region. Imagine a sphere of light formed there. Intone the name "Shaddai El Chai" (*Shah-dye El-Chai*, meaning "Almighty Living God") several times, as before.

Visualize the shaft of light descending from the Yesod (groin) center into your Malkuth center at the feet and ankles. Vibrate the name "Adonai ha-Aretz" (*Ah-doe-nye ha-Ah-retz*, meaning "Lord of Earth") a number of times, as before.

Imagine the Middle Pillar complete. Then circulate the light you have brought down through the Middle Pillar around the outside of your body to strengthen your aura. (Perform each circulation a number of times.)

Circulation One: Side to Side

Using the cycles of rhythmic breathing (exhale for descent, inhale for ascent), bring the light down one side of the body and up the other, from Kether to Malkuth and back to Kether. Exhale and visualize the light descending the left side of the body. Inhale and imagine the light ascending the right side of the body back to Kether.

Circulation Two: Front to Back

After performing this for a short space of time, imagine the ribbon of light descending from Kether down the front of your body to Malkuth and rising up your back, returning again to Kether.

Circulation Three: The Shower of Light

Still employing rhythmic breathing, visualize the sphere of Malkuth, then see the shaft of light rising up the Middle Pillar in the center of your body. When it reaches Kether, imagine a shower of light cascading down the outside of your body as it descends to Malkuth again. Circulate the light in this manner for some time.

Circulation Four: The Ascending Spiral (Optional)³

Then see the light rise again in a ribbon that spirals around the outside of your body from Malkuth to Kether.

Finally, center some of the energy in Tiphareth, the heart center.

For the most part, Golden Dawn rituals are designed for the adept magician of the Second or Inner Order. Therefore, many of these rituals are highly complex; they often involve stringing together a series of intricate rituals back-to-back in one ceremony. It is not our intention to present a number of complicated rituals to beginners in the hopes that they will “sink or swim.” What we will do, however, is outline the basic steps that are involved in Golden Dawn rituals. Armed with the knowledge of the rituals and invocations provided here, beginners can create their own Golden Dawn-style ceremonies.

3. The circulation that we call the Ascending Spiral was recommended by Regardie in his book on *The Middle Pillar* (87–88). Later, he dropped it in favor

The Temple and Magical Implements

It is preferable for any student of the Golden Dawn to be able to have a private space for temple work. Ideally, the temple should be set up in a spare room, although if this is not feasible, magicians will often move aside the furniture in their living room to create a temporary sacred space.

It should be remembered that there is no such thing as an essential piece of magical paraphernalia. The most important tool in magic is the human mind. Nevertheless, the regalia, working tools, altars, and other symbols used in magic can help enhance the ritual experience and provide focus for the magician's willpower and imagination. One's personal temple space can be as elaborate or sparse as desired. Here we will only list a few of the magical items that the beginner may wish to obtain. If more information is desired, the reader can consult our book on *Creating Magical Tools or Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple*.

- 1) A black robe
- 2) A black cubical altar
- 3) A red cross and a white triangle (the Golden Dawn symbol)
- 4) A white pillar candle and a black pillar candle
- 5) A chalice of water
- 6) A censer for incense or stick incense holder
- 7) A dagger for banishing (optional)
- 8) A simple wooden wand for invoking (optional)

The altar should be placed in the middle of the room facing east. The cross and triangle belong on the center of the altar. The pillar candles should be placed on the eastern side of the altar with the white candle on the right and the black candle on the left. Place the chalice of water in the northern side of the temple room. The burning incense belongs in the

of the circulation we call the Shower of Light. The Ascending Spiral is purely optional.

southern side of the sacred space. When working in temple, the magician stands west of the altar, facing east.

Preparation for Ritual

Before beginning a ritual, the student should take some time to shift consciousness away from the daily grind of the mundane world to a more elevated frame of mind. Prior to the commencement of any of the rituals given in this chapter, the reader should sit in a comfortable but alert position, close the eyes, relax, and clear the mind. Deep, rhythmic breathing for at least five minutes will go a long way in shifting one's focus to spiritual pursuits.

Basic Steps Involved in a Golden Dawn Ritual

There are three fundamental sections in any given Golden Dawn ceremony: the Opening, the Middle Point, and the Closing. These three segments can be further divided into fourteen steps that we have outlined below.

THE OPENING

- 1) Declaration of the Commencement of a Ritual
- 2) A Banishing Ritual
- 3) Initial Purification and Consecration
- 4) Circumambulation
- 5) Adoration

THE MIDDLE POINT

- 6) An Invocation Ritual
- 7) An Invocation to the Highest
- 8) The Main Working

THE CLOSING

- 9) Final Purification and Consecration
- 10) Reverse Circumambulation
- 11) Adoration
- 12) License to Depart
- 13) Banishing Ritual
- 14) Declare Temple Closed

These fourteen steps are defined in detail as follows.

1) Declaration of the Commencement of a Ritual

Go to the northeast corner of the temple and say: "Hekas! Hekas! Este Bebeloi!" (*Hay-kahs, hey-kahs, es-stay bee-beh-loy!* Meaning: "Far, far from this place be the profane!")

This magical phrase was originally uttered at the Eleusinian Mysteries. It is a standard phrase used to open a Golden Dawn ritual. It gives any unwanted entities present the opportunity to leave on their own before they are banished.

2) A Banishing Ritual

The standard is the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP), to cleanse the area of all unwanted energies and set up a magic circle of protection.

3) Initial Purification and Consecration of a Temple

Take up the cup and purify the room with water, starting in the east and moving clockwise around the room. Trace the cross and invoking water triangle (see figure 19) in all four quarters. The three lines of the triangle may be traced, or the magician may simply mark the three points of the triangle by sprinkling water thrice toward the quarter. As you do so, say:

"So therefore, first, the priest who governeth the works of fire, must sprinkle with the lustral water of the loud resounding sea." (You may

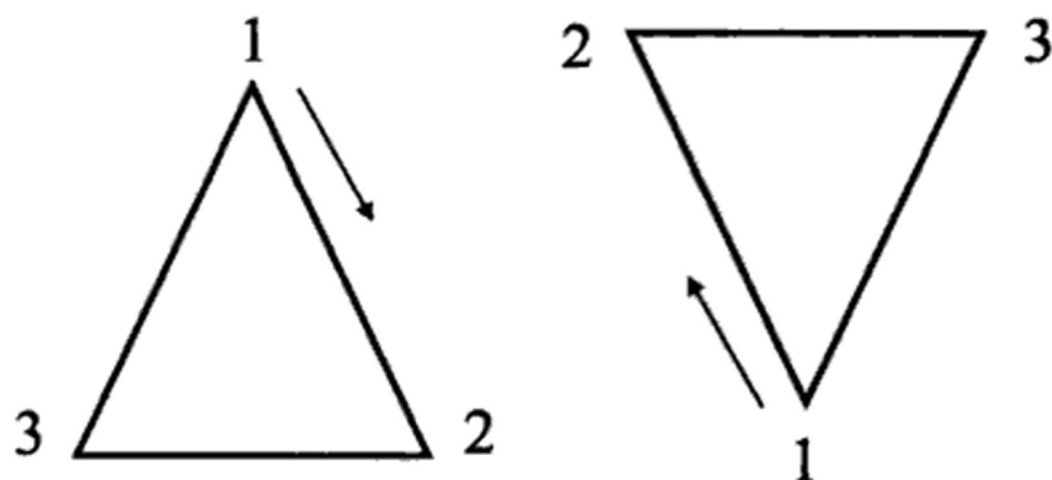


Figure 19: Fire triangle (left) and water triangle (right)

either make this proclamation in segments to make it last through the purification of all four quarters, or you can say it after the purification of the fourth and final quarter when you return to the east.)

Take up the incense and consecrate the room with fire, starting in the east and moving clockwise around the room. Trace the cross and invoking fire triangle (see figure 19) in all four quarters. As before, the three lines of the triangle may be traced, or the magician may simply mark the three points of the triangle by waving the incense thrice toward the quarter. In the same manner that you did so previously, say:

"And when after all the phantoms are banished, thou shalt see that holy and formless fire, that fire which darts and flashes through the hidden depths of the universe, hear thou the voice of fire!"

Purifying the temple with water acts to ritually cleanse the temple in a passive way, not unlike a blessing. It is a less harsh way of cleansing, as opposed to the Banishing Ritual. Consecrating the temple with fire sanctifies it. This action charges the temple, dedicating it as a sacred space. Both actions together have a balancing effect that equilibrates and "calms" the area after banishing.

4) *The Circumambulation (The Rising of the Light)*

Walk three times clockwise around the circumference of the temple in a wide circle. This will build up the magical energy in a temple, especially if the pace is quick. Give the Projection Sign and the Sign of Silence when-

ever passing the east. When performed during a Circumambulation, the Projection Sign has the effect of “pushing” the light forward around the temple, while the Sign of Silence keeps the energy from rebounding back to the magician. The Circumambulation is usually followed by the Adoration to the Lord of the Universe.

5) The Adoration to the Lord of the Universe

Go west of the altar and face east. Say: “Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe!” (Give the Projection Sign.) Say: “Holy art Thou, whom Nature hath not formed!” (Give the Projection Sign.) Then say: “Holy art Thou, the Vast and the Mighty One!” (Give the Projection Sign.) Finally, say: “Lord of the Light, and of the Darkness!” (Give the Sign of Silence).

The Adoration is a ritualized prayer that signifies the fourfold aspect of Divinity. It portrays the magician’s deference to the Highest Source of All, with which the magician must always act in alignment and accordance—never against.

6) An Invocation Ritual

At this point, the magician would invoke the desired spiritual energies into the temple. The beginning student may employ the traditional Lesser Invoking Ritual of the Pentagram to this end. As an alternative to the LIRP, the reader may wish to use the following rite, the Invoking Ritual of the Triangles, which we have created for this purpose. This ritual is designed to invoke the energies of the four elements into the temple space.

The Invoking Ritual of the Triangles

Stand west of the altar facing east. Perform the Qabalistic Cross.

Go clockwise to the east. Use a simple wand or the index finger of the right hand to trace the lines of a large air triangle (see figure 20). Thrust the wand tip or index finger through the center of the triangle and vibrate “Ruach” (*roo-ahk*), which is Hebrew for “air.” Keep the right arm extended throughout, never let it drop. (The triangles should be visualized in a flaming blue or white light.)

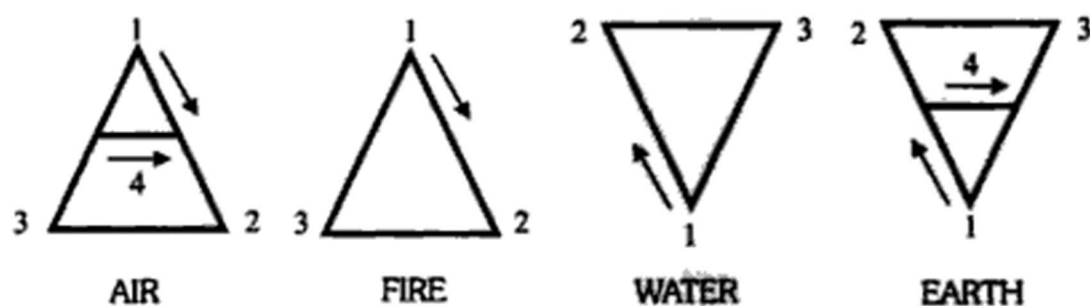


Figure 20: Invoking triangles

Go clockwise to the south. Trace the lines of the fire triangle toward the south. Thrust the wand tip or index finger through the center of the triangle and vibrate "Ash," which is Hebrew for "Fire."

Go clockwise to the west. Trace the lines of the water triangle. Thrust the wand tip or index finger through the center of the triangle and vibrate "Maim" (*may-eem*), which is Hebrew for "water."

Go to the north. Trace the lines of the earth triangle. Thrust the wand tip or index finger through the center of the triangle and vibrate "Aretz" (*ah-retz*), which is Hebrew for "earth."

Return to the west of the altar, facing east. Extend your arms in the form of a cross. Invoke and visualize the four Archangels of the elements exactly as you would do in the Pentagram Ritual: "Before me RAPHAEL, behind me, GABRIEL, on my right hand MICHAEL, on my left hand URIEL."

Then say: "For about me flame the triangles of the four elements, the macrocosm divided, and in the center is the star of the hexagram—the triangles united."

Finish with the Qabalistic Cross.

7) An Invocation to the Highest

Golden Dawn magicians always invoke the highest aspect of Divinity before commencing any important magical working. Here the beginner may use a prayer or invocation of his or her own choosing, so long as the deity invoked represents the magician's highest ideal of the Eternal Source of the universe.

The following is a Qabalistic/Rosicrucian invocation that Israel Regardie adapted from the Adeptus Minor Ritual. Other invocations that may be used or adapted for this purpose are given at the end of this chapter. (See "Prayers and Invocations.")

"Unto Thee, Sole Wise, Sole Eternal, and Sole Merciful One,
Be the praise and glory forever.
Who hath permitted me, who now standeth humbly before Thee,
to enter thus far into the sanctuary of Thy mysteries.
Not unto me, Adonai, but unto Thy name be the Glory.
Let the influence of Thy Divine Ones descend upon my head,
and teach me the value of self-sacrifice
So that I shrink not in the hour of trial.
But that thus my name may be written on high,
And my Genius stand in the presence of the Holy One.
In that hour when the Son of Man is invoked before the Lord of
Spirits
And His Name before the Ancient of Days."

If desired, the magician could add the following:

"Glory be unto Thee, O Lord of the Universe,
for Thy Glory flows out rejoicing unto the ends of the Universe.
Come Thou in the Power of the Light!
Come Thou in the Light of Wisdom!
Come Thou in the Mercy of the Light!
The Light hath Healing in its Wings!"

8) *The Main Working*

This is the point in the ceremony that is the primary reason for performing the ritual in the first place. The main working may be a divination, such as a tarot reading, to find a solution to a difficult problem; to bring peace, balance, or healing to a chaotic environment or strenuous situation; to increase one's personal energy or health; a meditation; a path-working; a consecration; a reading from a sacred text; the performance of

an exercise such as the Middle Pillar; a Mystic Repast of the Four Elements; or simply a contemplation of further spiritual growth. The magician should clearly state his or her reason for performing the rite, and should always address it to the Highest Divine Power. An example of this kind of declaration could be:

"I, (state magical motto), open this temple to perform a working in the magic of Light. I seek to *meditate on the symbol of the caduceus and extract whatever spiritual knowledge the Divine One may confer upon me*. Look with favor upon this ceremony. Grant me what I seek, so that through this rite I may obtain greater understanding and thereby advance in the Great Work."

The student may substitute his or her own ritual intention for the italicized section above.

9) Final Purification and Consecration of a Temple

After the Main Working of the ceremony has been completed, purify and consecrate the temple again, exactly as in step 3. This helps to re-equilibrate the energies of the temple, particularly after any fluctuations in energy.

10) The Reverse Circumambulation

(The Fading of the Light)

Walk three times counterclockwise around the circumference of the temple in a wide circle. This will act to naturally dissipate the energy in the temple. Give the Projection Sign and the Sign of Silence whenever passing the east.

11) Adoration to the Lord of the Universe

This is performed exactly as in step 5.

12) License to Depart

This grants all spiritual energies present permission to leave the temple after the work of magic has been completed. One should always give the entities present the option of leaving on their own before banishing them with the LBRP. One example of a License to Depart is as follows:

"I now release any spirits that may have been imprisoned by this ceremony. Depart in peace to your abodes and habitations. Go with the blessings of Yeheshuah, Yehovashah."⁴

13) A Banishing Ritual

Perform the LBRP exactly as in the beginning.

14) Declare the Temple Closed

Say: "I now declare this temple duly closed. So mote it be."

The following ritual, the Mystic Repast, is very similar to the Christian Eucharist. In this rite, various substances that correspond to elemental energies are ceremonially named and consecrated to the spiritual forces they represent. The magician charges these substances with the divine presence through invocation. By consuming or otherwise partaking of these consecrated items, the magician assimilates their refined spiritual essence into him- or herself. This can be considered a form of theurgic union with the higher and divine powers. Frequent performance of the Mystic Repast is an excellent way of cleansing and transforming the magician's entire being. Taking in these purified elements results in the expulsion of impure elements from the psyche. Through this simple rite of spiritual alchemy the soul of the magician is gradually exalted, making the magician's commitment to the Great Work that much easier to attain.

A Mystic Repast of the Four Elements

Arrange the temple as previously indicated. Upon the altar, surrounding the symbols of the cross and triangle, should be the following: a rose in the east, a red candle in the south, a cup of wine in the west, and a platter of bread and salt in the north.

Stand west of the altar and face east. Perform the Qabalistic Cross.

4. The Hebrew names of Jesus, also known as the Pentagrammaton. Other Qabalistic divine names could be substituted here, such as YHVH or Adonai, depending on the exact nature of the working.

Raise your hands in the air and say, "I invite all you beings of elemental air, archangels, angels, kings, rulers, and elementals to partake with me of the mystic repast of the four elements."

Pick up the rose and say, "I invite you to inhale with me the perfume of this rose as a symbol of air." Smell the rose.

Pick up the candle and say, "To feel with me the warmth of this sacred lamp, as a symbol of fire." Hold your hand over the flame.

Pick up the platter and say, "To eat with me this bread and salt, as types of earth." Dip a piece of bread into the salt and eat it.

Pick up the cup and say, "And finally, to drink with me this wine, the consecrated emblem of elemental water." Trace a cross in the air with the cup—up, down, left, right. Drink the wine. Place the empty cup between the cross and the triangle.

Then say, "It is finished."

Prayers and Invocations

Egyptian Invocations

The two Egyptian prayers that follow are taken from Florence Farr's "Egyptian Magic," as published in Westcott's *Collectanea Hermetica*.⁵

*Hymn to Ptah-Tanenvi*⁶

"Hail to thee, O Ptah-Tanen, great God who concealeth his form,
Thou art watching when at rest, the father of all fathers, and of all
gods,
watcher who traverseth the endless ages of eternity;
the heaven was uncreated, uncreated was the earth, the water
flowed not;

5. William Wynn Westcott, *Collectanea Hermetica* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1998), Vol. VIII, 37–38.

6. Ptah-Tanen was one of the many forms of the Creator god Ptah. This may refer to Ptah as Lord of the Earth.

thou hast formulated the earth, thou hast united thy limbs,
thou hast counted thy members.
What thou hast found apart thou hast put into its place.
Oh! God, Architect of the World, Thou art without a Father,
Begotten by thine Own Growth;
Thou art without a Mother, being born by reflection of thyself.
Thou drivest away the darkness by the beams of thine Eyes.
Thou ascendest into the Zenith of Heaven;
and thou comest down even as thou wentest up.
When Thou art a dweller in the Infernal World, Thy knees are
above the earth,
and Thy Head is in the Upper Sky,
Thou sustainest the substances which thou hast made.
It is by thine own strength that thou movest;
Thou art raised up by the might of thine own arms,
thou weighest upon thyself kept firm by the mystery which is in
thee.
The roaring of thy voice is in the clouds; thy breath is on the
mountain tops;
the waters of thy inundation cover the lofty trees of every region,
Heaven and earth obey the command which thou hast given,
Thou retest and it is Night; when thine Eyes shine forth we are
illuminated;
Oh! Let us give glory to the God Who hast raised up the sky,
and who causeth his disk to float over the bosom of Mut.
Who hath made Gods and men and all their generations.
Thou the babe who is brought forth daily.
O thou Ancient One Who has reached the limits of Time;
Thou Immovable One Who traverseth every Path;
the Height which cannot be attained."

Adoration of Ammon Ra Harmachis'

"Hail to Thee the Holy One Who hast formed thyself,
 Vast in Thy Measure, Illimitable,
 Divine Chief rejoicing in the power of creating himself.
 Vast and Flaming Serpents of Wisdom,
 Strength Supreme and Mysterious Form.
 Invisible Spirit.
 Author of His Unconquerable Power,
 King of the Higher and the Lower Land,
 Ammon Ra.
 Perfect and forceful Light. Created from Himself!
 Twofold Horizon. Hawk of the East.
 Brilliant Illuminating. Blazing forth.
 Intelligence more intellectual than the Gods.
 Thou art hidden in the great Ammon.
 In thy transformation thou revolvest in the solar disk.
 God, Totnen, Vaster than the Gods.
 Thou wast old and art born again.
 Wanderer of the Centuries.
 Ammon eternal in all things.
 Thou, the God whose thought begat the World."

Hermetic Invocation

The following invocation is adapted from a prayer entitled "The Secret Song: The Holy Speech" from *The Divine Pymander* of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus.

"Let all the Nature of the world entertain the hearing of this Hymn.
 Be opened, O Earth, and let all the Treasure of the Rain be opened.
 You Trees tremble not, for I will sing, and praise the Lord of the
 Creation,

7. A combination of the gods Ammon, Ra, and Harmachis, "Horns of the horûon."

and the All, and the One.

Be opened you Heavens,

ye Winds stand still, and let the immortal Circle of God, receive
these words.

For I will sing, and praise him that created all things, that fixed the
Earth,

and hung up the Heavens, and commanded the sweet Water to
come out of the Ocean, into all the World inhabited, and not
inhabited,

to the use, and nourishment of all things, or men.

That commanded the fire to shine for every action, both to Gods,
and Men.

Let us altogether give him blessing, which rideth upon the Heavens,
the Creator of all Nature.

This is he, that is the Eye of the Mind, and Will accept the praise of
my Powers.

O all ye Powers that are in me, praise the One, and the All.

Sing together with my Will, all you Powers that are in me.

O Holy Knowledge, being enlightened by thee, I magnify the
intelligible Light,

and rejoice in the Joy of the Mind.

All my Powers sing praise with me, and thou my Continnence,
sing praise my Righteousness by me; praise that which is righteous.

O Communion which is in me, praise the All.

By me the Truth sings praise to the Truth, the Good praiseth the
Good.

O Life, O Light from us, unto you comes this praise and
thanksgiving.

I give thanks unto thee, O Father, the operation or act
of my Powers.

I give thanks unto thee, O God, the Power of my operations.

By me thy Word sings praise unto thee,
receive by me this reasonable Sacrifice in words.

The powers that are in me, cry these things, they praise the All,
they fulfill thy Will; thy Will and Counsel is from thee unto thee.

O All, receive a reasonable Sacrifice from all things.

O Life, save all that is in us; O Light enlighten, O God the Spirit;
for the Mind guideth the Word:

O Spirit bearing Workman.

Thou art God, thy servant crieth these things unto thee through,
by the Fire, by the Air, by the Earth, by the Water, by the Spirit, by
thy Creatures.

From eternity I have found the means to bless and praise thee, and
I have what I seek; for I rest in thy Will."



Golden Dawn Teachings: What Is Included

The Golden Dawn system of magic was designed to teach its students abstract esoteric concepts as well as the more practical applications of Western ceremonial magic. Egyptian, Judeo-Christian, Greek, Gnostic, Rosicrucian, and Masonic elements can all be found within the Hermetic teachings of the Order. While the complete curriculum of the Golden Dawn is too extensive to list in its entirety, the essential components of it are described here. These include Qabalah, astrology, divination, spiritual alchemy, skrying and astral work, and Enochian magic.

Qabalah

Qabalah is a Hebrew word that means “tradition.” It is derived from the root word *qibel*, meaning “to receive” or “that which is received.” This refers to the ancient custom of handing down esoteric knowledge by oral transmission. Legend has it that the mysteries of the Qabalah were unveiled by God to the angels, who in turn transmitted it to Adam after his exile from Eden, to teach him how to recover Paradise lost.

The word *Qabalah* encompasses an entire body of ancient and medieval Hebrew mystical principles that is the indispensable cornerstone and focus of the Western Esoteric Tradition. Virtually all of modern Western mysticism can trace its roots to the Qabalah. It lies at the very heart of Western magical philosophy. The ancient origins of the Qabalah

are unclear, but it certainly contains some vestiges of Egyptian, Greek, and Chaldean influence.

By its nature, mysticism is knowledge that cannot be communicated directly, but may be expressed only through symbolism and metaphor. Like other esoteric systems, Qabalah draws on the mystic's awareness of the transcendence of that which is divine and eternal. Another element of Qabalah is that of theosophy, which seeks to reveal the hidden mysteries of God as well as the relationship between the divine life on one hand, and the life of humans on the other. The goal of the Qabalist is to discover and reinvent keys to the understanding of arcane symbols that reflect these eternal mysteries. The primary symbol of the Qabalah is the Tree of Life, which has been described as a symbolic map of the universe in its major aspects, and also of its smaller counterpart, humanity.¹ "The great theme of the Kabbalah is God before creation, and the soul of man after it."²

According to Samuel L. Mathers, the principle doctrines of the Qabalah are designed to solve the following problems:

- The Supreme Being, His nature and attributes.
- The cosmology.
- The creation of angels and man.
- The destiny of man and angels.
- The nature of the soul.
- The nature of angels, demons, and elementals.
- The import of the revealed law.
- The transcendental symbolism of numerals.
- The peculiar mysteries contained in the Hebrew letters.
- The equilibrium of contraries.³

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1. Israel Regardie, *A Garden of Pomegranates: Skrying on the Tree of Life* (3rd ed., St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1999), 18.
 2. Dagobert D. Runes, *The Wisdom of the Kabbalah: Its Essence and Philosophy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), 9.
 3. S. L. MacGregor Mathers, *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1989), 15.

The Qabalah, which Dion Fortune called “the Yoga of the West,”⁴ reveals the nature of certain physical and psychological phenomena. Once these are understood, the student can use the principles of magic to exercise control over the conditions and circumstances of one’s life. Magic provides the practical application of the theories supplied by the Qabalah. As Fortune stated:

For the last ten years I have lived and moved and had my being in the Practical Qabalah; I have used its methods both subjectively and objectively till they have become a part of myself, and I know from experience what they yield in psychic and spiritual results, and their incalculable value as a method of using the mind.⁵

Historical Perspective

Although the origins of the Qabalah are steeped in ancient Jewish mystical lore, a great deal of the Qabalah as we know it emerged from the various mystical traditions of medieval Jews living in Germany, France, and particularly Spain. It was during this time that the major Qabalistic texts were composed or written down after centuries of existing as an oral tradition. The most important of these were *Sepher ha-Yetzirah*, the “Book of Formation,” which appeared anonymously between the third and sixth century C.E., *Sepher ha-Bahir* or the “Book of Brightness,” dating to the later half of the twelfth century, and *Sepher ha-Zohar* or the “Book of Splendor” (1280–86).

Sepher ha-Yetzirah, commonly known as *Sepher Yetzirah*, is the oldest Hebrew text on divine cosmology. It is a mystical treatise on the significance of the ten divine emanations (sephiroth) and the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Taken together, these are said to comprise the thirty-two Paths of Wisdom. A brief tract entitled “Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom” written in 1642 by Johannes Stephanus Rittangelius was later added to the *Sepher Yetzirah*.

Sepher ha-Bahir, also called *Sepher Bahir* or simply the *Bahir*, contains a symbolic commentary on the Hebrew scriptures. Its basic theme is the

4. Dion Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah* (New York: Ibis Books, 1981), 12.

5. *Ibid.*, 21.

mystical meaning of the shapes and sounds of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The *Bahir* also contains an explanation of the ten sephiroth, which the *Bahir* calls the "Ten Sayings."

Sepher ha-Zohar, often called *Sepher Zohar* or simply the *Zohar*, deals with the mystical meaning of biblical texts and the mystery of creation. It contains lengthy discussions of the ten sephiroth, the problem of evil, and the universal implication of prayer and good works.

During the Renaissance, scholars, theologians, and philosophers of the Neoplatonic Academy in Florence, such as Pico della Mirandola, began to formulate a new type of Qabalah that encompassed Christian theology and principles. According to Mirandola, "There is no science which makes us more certain of the divinity of Christ than magic and cabala."⁶ This Christianized Qabalah was further developed by Christian Hebrew scholars such as Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522), a student of Mirandola's philosophy. It is in Reuchlin's *De Verbo Mirifico* ("Concerning the Miraculous Word") that we find the first reference to the Pentagrammaton or five-lettered name of Jesus (Yeheshuah יהוהש"ה), as an evolution of the Tetragrammaton (Yod Heh Vav Heh, יהוה), the ineffable name of God the Creator.

The magical and theurgic aspects of the Qabalah were exalted in the works of influential magician Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1523). His magnum opus, *de Occulta Philosophia*, known today as *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, is a virtual encyclopedia of medieval magical lore and a Qabalistic catalog of information that describes both occult correspondences and the tools necessary to perform magical ceremonies. This influential text would later become a major sourcebook for much of the Golden Dawn's teachings on Qabalah, planetary magic, and other subjects. Authors such as Agrippa and others have considerably expanded the basic Qabalistic correspondences of earlier texts such as the *Sepher Yetzirah*:

Later generations of scholars and students, by using this root system, have added a complex series of additional data. This includes infor-

6. From Pico della Mirandola's *Opera Omnia* (Basil, 1557; reprint, Hildesheim: George Olms, 1969), 1, 166.

mation from Greek and Egyptian mythology, meditative material derived from the Tarot, information based on mystical experience (visionary and ecstatic), a conglomerate of sounds and smells and colors—perfumes, jewels and, significantly too, modern scientific data. It has become a meaningful syncretism.⁷

In the seventeenth century, Baron Knorr von Rosenroth (1636–89) translated part of the *Zohar* into Latin in his work *Kabbala Denudata*, “The Kabbala Unveiled” (1677–1684), making the Hebrew Qabalah available to a much larger audience. A portion of this text was translated into English by S. L. MacGregor Mathers in 1888.

The Principles of Qabalah

The Qabalah is usually classified under four heads that overlap each other in some instances. They are:

1. **The Dogmatic Qabalah**—the study of ancient Qabalistic literature such as the Written Torah (also called the Pentateuch), the *Zohar*, the *Bahir*, and the *Sepher Yetzirah*.
2. **The Practical Qabalah**—deals with the construction of talismans and other methods of ceremonial magic.
3. **The Literal Qabalah**—deals with gematria, or the relationships between numbers and the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which yield many hidden meanings of Hebrew words and names.
4. **The Unwritten Qabalah**—refers to the correct knowledge of the sacred symbol known as the Tree of Life or the *Etz ha-Chayim*.

The diagram of the Tree of Life as depicted by the Golden Dawn first appeared in a text called *Oedopus Aegyptiacus*, published by Jesuit archaeologist Athanasius Kircher in 1652 (see figure 21). This version of the Tree shows the ten sephiroth and the twenty-two connecting paths in exactly the same arrangement as that adopted by the Golden Dawn.

7. Israel Regardie, *Foundations of Practical Magic* (2nd ed. Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: The Aquarian Press, 1983), 59.

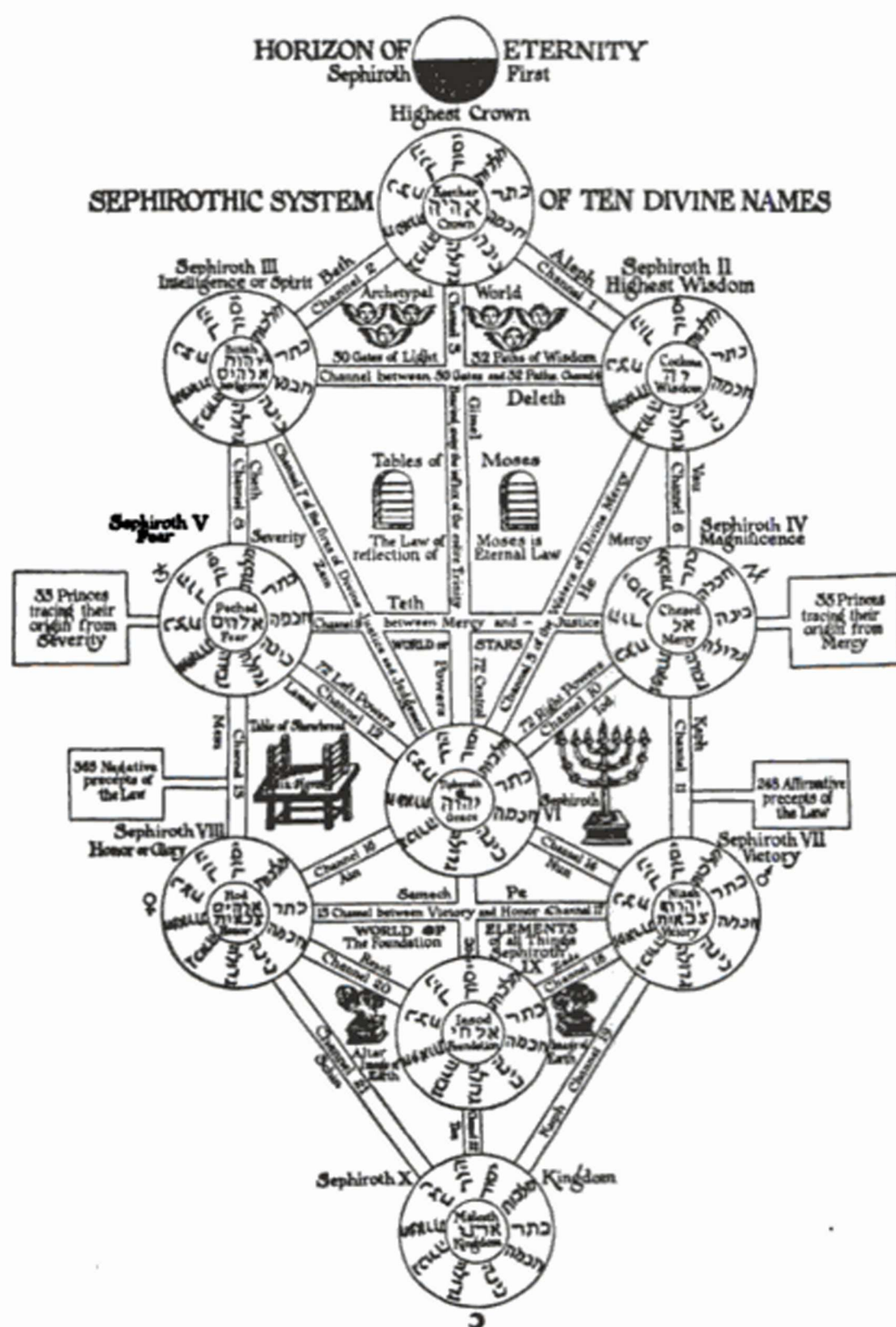


Figure 21: The Kircher Tree of Life

Kircher's ordering of the Hebrew letters to the twenty-two paths are also the same as the arrangement used by the Golden Dawn.

William Wynn Westcott produced an English translation of the *Sepher Yetzirah* as part of a lecture delivered to Anna Kingsford's Hermetic Society in 1886. Westcott explained that this volume, published in 1887, was prepared for "students of Theosophy and Hermetic philosophy, and to my pupils of the Study Groups of the Rosicrucian Society of England."⁸ The *Sepher Yetzirah* was of primary importance to the curriculum of the Golden Dawn—it was a major source of Qabalistic information contained in the Order's initiation ceremonies, ritual diagrams, and teachings.

The Hermetic Qabalah as it exists today is not the property of any one religion or faith. Its principles are basic and universal. Today's Qabalah is a vibrant, living, and dynamic philosophy that includes the origin of the entire cosmos, the eternal mind of God, and the spiritual development of humankind. It is a precise mystical system that describes universal laws and shows us how to utilize spiritual principles in everyday life. By firmly fixing the Qabalistic symbols such as the Tree of Life in one's mind, the student has access to a rich group of archetypes that the Higher self can use to communicate to the lower self, thus making true spiritual growth more readily attainable. To quote Israel Regardie:

First of all, the philosophy of the Qabalah is a philosophy of evolution. The universe, with all its planets and worlds and independent beings, was conceived to be an emanation from a primeval substance-principle which some have called God, the Absolute, the Infinite, the All, and so forth. In the Qabalah, this principle, which is the One Reality, is named Ain Soph, the Infinite.⁹

According to Qabalistic tradition, the Ain Soph began to unfold its energy into the universe as we know it through ten different stages or

8. W. Wynn Westcott, "Introduction," *Sepher Yetzirah: The Book of Formation* (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc. 1980), 14.

9. Regardie, *The Tree of Life: An Illustrated Study in Magic* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 2001), 45.

levels (the sephiroth). Each successive level became more dense than the previous one. This divine energy originated from nothingness, acquiring substance as it descended into the different stages of manifestation. The energy issued forth, following a cyclical pattern of emanation, limitation, expansion, and overflow until, at length, the energies solidified. The tenth level of emanation was the last, resulting in the physical universe as we know it. The Qabalists agreed that there were ten emanations because to them ten was a perfect number—one that includes every digit without repetition, and contains the total essence of all numbers. The number ten is therefore an all-embracing number. Outside of ten there exists no other such number, because what is beyond ten returns again to units.

The ten sephiroth, which have been already listed, emanate from the Ain Soph in succession as if one candle were lit from another without the emanator being diminished in any way and in a specific order. In this analogy, the original candle is not lessened in any respect, although it gives of its essence to the candles that follow. But unlike the candle, the sephiroth are not seen as being separated from the source. They are one with the deity, yet they are also distinct from one another, and therefore they are more easily comprehended by human beings who wish to approach the divine through prayer and meditation. The ten emanations are the diverse expressions and mind-states of a single divine unity. Each sephirah represents one specific aspect of god-energy or a particular level of consciousness, while the paths that connect them are the routes that we can take to arrive at these different levels.

The first and highest sephirah is Kether, the Crown, so called because it is above all the other spheres. Sometimes called "the Ancient," Kether represents the Absolute Unity—the infinite as opposed to the finite. From this unity emanate two coplanar principles, contrary in outward aspect, yet inseparable in essence. The second sephirah is Chokmah, Wisdom. It is considered male, active, and expansive. The third sephirah is Binah, Understanding. This sphere is considered female, passive, and contractive. "All that exists . . . all that has been formed by the Ancient (Whose name be sanctified!) can exist only in a male and a female."¹⁰

10. Adolphe Franck quoting from the Zohar in *The Kabbalah: Religious Philosophy of the Hebrews* (New York: Bell Publishing, 1940), 96.

The Qabalists asserted that the manifest universe was a world of thought and existence—the expression of divine ideas. The universe was fashioned because the Creator desired self-knowledge. Abstract Spirit longed for the experience of manifestation into matter. Thus the creation of the universe was itself a spiritual quest for even greater union—of Absolute Unity dividing itself and descending into matter (involution) in a “divine sacrifice”—and consequently, the diversity of matter ascending and returning back to its unified Source (evolution), shedding its complexity of separate forms as it rises. This idea was eloquently expressed by Rabbi Cordovero (1522–1570), a leading light among the Qabalists of his time, who suggested that the three Supernals representing the Crown, Wisdom, and Understanding should be seen as singular in essence:

The three first Sephiroth . . . : the Crown, Wisdom and Intelligence—should be regarded as one and the same thing. The first represents knowledge or science, the second he who knows, and the third that which is known. For the knowledge of the Creator is not like that of His creatures, for whom knowledge is distinct from the subject of knowledge, and depends upon objects which in turn are distinct from the subject. This differentiation is designated by the following three terms: thought, that which thinks, and the thing thought of.¹¹

Cordovero continues:

. . . the Creator is himself knowledge, that which knows, and that which is known all at the same time. His way of knowing does not consist of applying his thought to things outside himself; by knowing himself and perceiving himself, he knows and perceives all that is. Nothing exists that is not united with him and which he does not find in his own essence.¹²

He is the archetype of all things existing, and all things are in him in their purest and most perfect form; so that the perfection of the creatures consists in the support whereby they are united to the primary

11. Cordovero, quoted in Franck, 99.

12. Cordovero, quoted in Leo Schaya, *The Universal Meaning of the Kabbalah* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), 42.

source of his existence, and they sink down and fall from that perfect and lofty position in proportion to their separation from him.¹³

And finally:

It is thus that all manner of existence in this world have their form in the Sefiroth, and the Sefiroth have their form in the source from which they emanate.¹⁴

The rest of the sephiroth, seven in number, serve to build the world of matter. Like the preceding spheres, they emanate in triads—two extreme forces often described in terms of masculine and feminine energies, bound together by a third that unites and equilibrates them.

The fourth sephirah, Chesed or Mercy, is countered by the fifth sphere, Geburah, which is Power or Judgment. The first expands, the other contracts. One gives life, the other takes it. These forces cannot be separated, for the cosmos could not exist if they were. They are balanced by the sixth sephirah, Tiphareth or Beauty, which is the expression of all that is harmonious.

The next three spheres are dynamic—they represent the Creator as the generative principle of all life, and of all things in the manifest universe. The seventh sephirah, Netzach (Victory or Triumph), is the sphere of passion and emotion, while the eighth sephirah, Hod (Splendor or Glory), is the sphere of reason and intellect. It may seem odd to modern readers that these concepts can be related to the idea of generation, but as the Zohar describes them: "By the words Triumph and Glory we understand measure, multiplication and force; for all the forces in the universe spring from their midst; hence, these two Sefiroth are called the hosts of the Eternal."¹⁵ The forces of Netzach and Hod are combined and united in the ninth sephirah of Yesod, the Foundation, which the Zohar calls

13. Christian D. Ginsburg quoting Cordovero in *The Essenes, Their History and Doctrines: The Kabbalah, Its Development and Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1956), 216.

14. Cordovero, quoted in Franck, 100.

15. Franck, quoting from the Zohar, 101.

"the organ of generation" wherein is contained a divine "blueprint" of everything in the universe.

The tenth and final sephirah, Malkuth, is the Kingdom—the world of physical manifestation and the receptacle of all the forces and energies passed down from the other nine sephiroth.

One of the main principles of the Tree of Life is that of equilibrium. This idea, which permeates the descriptions of the sephirotic triads given above, is also present in the formation of the pillars of the Tree. The right-hand pillar (consisting of Chokmah, Chesed, and Netzach) corresponds to light, day, masculinity, and force. The left-hand pillar (composed of Binah, Geburah, and Hod) is assigned to darkness, night, femininity, and form. Thus, these pillars represent the two universal opposing forces. The whole of the cosmos depends on a harmonious balance existing between these energies. The Qabalah stresses a middle way between these two rival pillars—the avoidance of one-sided extremes that can lead to spiritual/psychological imbalance and disintegration. The extremes "point to the need for the union of the two opposites in a new and higher integrity. The middle pillar thus becomes symbolic of the 'way of return', the path of redemption, as it were."¹⁶ A considerable amount of magical theory and practice has been founded on this model.

As the Hermetic student begins to contemplate and experience the energies of the ten sephiroth and the twenty-two connecting paths of the Tree of Life, he or she will find that they develop into genuine forces that become animated within the psyche. These newly awakened forces will initiate a process of reorganization in the mind of the student, gathering up disjointed elements of the divine powers that lie dormant in the average person. They begin to structure themselves in accordance with the sephiroth, permitting the student to tap into a previously unknown source of divine inspiration that is kept alive and energized through meditation and active ritual work.

The Qabalah has often been called the "Ladder of Lights" because it depicts cosmic generation, which is the descent of the divine into the physical. It also defines how the individual may employ this "ladder" for

16. Regardie, *Foundations of Practical Magic*, 61.

spiritual ascent by purifying both body and mind through ceremony, contemplation, and prayer, until at length one achieves that pristine state of consciousness that is necessary to attain union with the Higher Self—that emissary to the Divine Self represented by the first sephirah of Kether.

Qabalistic Teachings of the Golden Dawn

The Qabalah is the foundation for most of the magic employed by the Golden Dawn. The various grades, officers, and even the layout of the Neophyte Hall are all based on the sephirotic structuring of the Qabalistic Tree of Life. Meditative techniques hidden within the Qabalah are today being rediscovered by the New Age movement, but they were exalted long ago in such Golden Dawn rituals as the Middle Pillar Exercise.

In the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn, students learn a great deal of Qabalistic knowledge, including the attributes of the sephiroth, gematria (Hebrew numerology), names of Hebrew angels and archangels, the planets and elements, and the principle parts of the human soul as defined by Qabalists. They must also memorize the Hebrew alphabet along with all its correspondences, and be able to draw the Hebrew letters to form angelic and divine names.

Understanding the arrangements that are formed by the Sephiroth on the Tree of Life is also important. Golden Dawn students are taught the various patterns that help elucidate the Tree's function and essence, including the Four Qabalistic Worlds—planes or levels of manifestation between spirit and matter. They also learn various Qabalistic teachings concerning the diverse correspondences of the Shem ha-Mephoresh or "divided name," and the implication of humanity's allegorical Fall from Eden. Students are also made aware of the archetypal and anthropomorphic images that are associated with the sephiroth, including the idea of Adam Kadmon or Celestial Man, the divine blueprint or prototype of humanity whose "body" is comprised of the ten sephiroth.

Eventually students learn how to make Qabalistic sigils and talismans for magical work. In the higher teachings of the Golden Dawn, basic Qabalistic knowledge permeates every aspect of the work, curriculum,

and rituals of the Second Order. This is because, as Israel Regardie observed, the Qabalah's thirty-two Paths of Wisdom can be compared to "a filing cabinet of thirty-two jackets in which an extensive system of information is filed."¹⁷

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Astrology

The word *astrology* literally means the science or study of the stars. Astrology is a science that examines the action of celestial bodies on living beings, nonliving objects, and earthly conditions, as well as their reactions to such influences. This stellar science concentrates on the relationship between celestial events and human events.

The study of the stars is one of the oldest known sciences. No doubt our prehistoric ancestors watched the sky with a sense of wonder. The astrological arts were well known to the ancient Egyptians, Hindus, Chinese, Persians, and the great civilizations of the ancient Americas.

17. Regardie, *A Garden of Pomegranates: Skrying on the Tree of Life*, 31.

Historical Perspective

The earliest farming communities along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates in ancient Sumer (4000–2350 B.C.E.) understood the necessity of timing their crops to exploit the seasonal floods for irrigation. It was here that the seeds of Western astrology took root. The Sumerians became keenly aware of the cyclical movements of the constellations, which were tied to the seasons. Temple scribes kept long lists of stars and constellations, and the stars were viewed as celestial reflections of pastoral flocks of sheep, grazing in the night sky. The main system of Sumerian astrology, a form that persisted in Babylon until the middle of the fifth century B.C.E., was a method of interpreting star-omens. The constellations were named after various deities and each was assigned different qualities.

Gradually the Babylonian star-gazers noticed that there was one area of sky through which the planets and the luminaries of the sun and moon traveled, and this belt or circle of sky included twelve separate constellations that were used to distinguish twelve different segments of the belt. This was a helpful discovery, since the number twelve was divisible by the Babylonian mathematical base of sixtieths. It was also noticed that the lunar cycle (the orbital cycle of the moon around the Earth) was completed twelve times a year. Thus the first twelve-sign zodiac was a creation of Mesopotamian culture. The circle or wheel of the zodiac was said to extend eight or nine degrees on each side of the ecliptic, the sun's apparent path around the Earth, or the orbit of the Earth as seen from the sun. The earliest known personal horoscope ("hour pointer") using the zodiac as a map of the heavens at the time of a person's birth dates to 410 B.C.E.

Archeological evidence suggests that the Babylonians were more diligent and observant star-watchers than the Egyptians. However, the ancient inhabitants of the Nile River Valley were responsible for discovering the origins of the system later named by the Greeks as the decanates or decans. The Egyptians noticed that a different constellation followed the sun over the horizon at regular ten-day intervals over the course of the year. The Egyptians named thirty-six star gods who were said to have

influence over the fate of human beings and over the thirty-six divisions of the sun's path.

The ancient Greeks only learned to differentiate between the fixed stars and the planets after being influenced by Babylonian culture in the fifth century B.C.E. Greek astrologers absorbed the star knowledge of both the Babylonians and Egyptians, renamed the constellations after their own gods, added more attributions to the same, and created their own system of astrology. They also conceived of each of the twelve signs as the domicile or "house" of a particular planet, and portioned each house into various segments. Thus the zodiac evolved into the 360-degree division that we recognize today as the wheel of the zodiac, complete with the thirty-six decanates or ten-degree divisions of a zodiacal house. The Greeks embraced the Aristotelian view that the sun, moon, and stars all revolved around stationary planet Earth in perfect, circular orbits.

Each of the twelve signs was attributed to a specific part of the human body. In addition, the twelve signs were further divided into four triplicities or sets of three signs that are grouped together and assigned to one of the four elements of fire, water, air, or earth.

The Romans adopted this system, just as they did with almost everything else of Greek origin. However, the social and political attitudes toward astrology varied greatly under the Romans, who seemed to have a love/hate relationship with the celestial science.

For the most part, astrological texts were written in Greek rather than in Latin. With the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 C.E., education also crumbled. The orthodoxy of the Christian Church was hostile to the science of the stars, now seen as demonic, and would not tolerate dissent. For all intents and purposes, astrology vanished in the Dark Ages of Western Europe (approx. 400–900 C.E.), along with the knowledge of the Greek language.

By 750 C.E., the Islamic Empire extended from central Asia to southern Spain. After conquering the Byzantine Empire of the Middle East, Muslims enthusiastically adapted many aspects of the rich culture of that region. The astrological tradition survived in the West under Islamic rule. Greek texts on mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and astrology were

eagerly translated into Arabic and widely disseminated. It was under these conditions that the Muslims began to recognize Hellenized Jews as the astrological heirs of the Chaldean magi. Jewish and Arab astrologers thrived under such conditions. A relatively tolerant religious atmosphere in Muslim Spain, from the early eighth century to the middle of the thirteenth century, provided a magnet for Jews from all over the known world. Gradually, their ideas spread across Western Europe when the Jews started to flee from more extremist Islamic sects as well as from Christians who were determined to reclaim Spain.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Arabic translations of Greek classics, as well as astrological and magical texts, were being translated into Latin for interested scholars and Christian theologians. It took a considerable amount of time for the intellectuals of Europe to become reacquainted with the works of Plato, Ptolemy, Aristotle, and others. But once rediscovered, the scholarly authority of Aristotle remained unchallenged throughout the Middle Ages. Since Aristotle had positively affirmed the practice of astrology, the study of the stars gained new respect as a natural science, even among some high-ranking Christian theologians such as Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). However, divination using astrology was still frowned upon by the church.

With the dawning of the Renaissance came the translation of all manner of ancient Greek texts—including the classical works of Greek literature, philosophical texts, Neoplatonic teachings, magical texts, astrological treatises, and the *Hermetica*, which also contained astrological tracts.

By the seventeenth century, the Aristotelian view of a geocentric universe, wherein all the planets revolved around the Earth, had been replaced by the astronomical discoveries of Copernicus (1473–1543), who demonstrated that the Earth and the planets orbited the sun. The solar-centered Copernican view of the universe was embraced by astronomers Tycho Brahe (1546–1601), Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), and Galileo (1564–1642). The general public did not immediately embrace these new theories and found them to be quite upsetting to their traditional worldview. But many of this new breed of astronomers, including Brahe and Kepler, saw little reason to do away with the creation

of horoscopes. Academics and learned men such as William Lilly (1602–1681), the official astrologer of the British parliament, endeavored to adapt the traditions of astrology to the new scientific reality.

Astrology flourished as the occult revival of the nineteenth century captivated the minds of many educated Europeans who were seeking new, more vibrant forms of spiritual experience. It was in this climate that groups such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn were able to incorporate the ancient teachings of astrology into a holistic system of esoteric philosophy.

Astrology is the progenitor of astronomy, and for many years the two existed as one science. Nowadays, astronomy is considered an “objective” science of distances, masses, speeds, etc., while astrology is a “subjective” and intuitive science that not only deals with the astronomical delineation of horoscopes but also embraces philosophical ideas, which help to explain the spiritual essence of life.

There are actually two branches of astrology. The first is exoteric astrology, which includes the mathematics involved in charting a horoscope and the predictive arts. The second is esoteric astrology, which deals with mysteries of the universe itself—the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical dynamics of the cosmos. Esoteric astrology reveals the universal pattern of living and the means by which human beings can align themselves with the divine matrix of the universe. It is a system for understanding celestial energies and a method for viewing the universe as a symmetrical whole.

Astrology in the Golden Dawn

In the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn the student learns basic astrological information concerning the zodiacal wheel, the twelve signs, the twelve houses, the decanates, the triplicities, the quadruplicities, and the aspects. Eventually the student also learns how to construct and interpret a zodiacal chart. The teachings of the Golden Dawn concentrate on two types of astrology: natal astrology and horary astrology. The first is used to construct a person's birth chart and the second is a form of divination used to determine the birth time of a question in an astrological reading. Both types use the same methods to erect a chart of the heavens.

All of this knowledge is later used for elemental, planetary, and zodiacal magic in the higher grades of the Inner Order. In addition, numerous lists of astrological correspondences and planetary hours dating from medieval sourcebooks are regularly consulted in the ritual work of the R. R. et A. C. The creation of astrological talismans and implements is a common practice in the Adept grades. Next to the teachings of the Qabalah, astrological correspondences are the most prevalent form of esoteric knowledge used in both the Outer and Inner Orders.

The astrological significance of the equinoxes is particularly emphasized in the Golden Dawn. Twice a year, at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, the officers of the Outer Order relinquish their positions and new officers are instated. The formula of the Ceremony of the Equinox is intended to create a magical link between the sun and the Order. Just as the sun is the light of the visible world, it also symbolizes the Divine Light. A decrease in the Earth's magnetic field during the equinoxes make them opportune occasions for tapping into solar energy. Also, at the time of equinox, both day and night are of equal length, and this is of extreme importance to the Order's primary theme of balanced equilibrium.

Certain teachings in the higher grades of the Second Order emphasize an astrological system that varies to some extent from that taught in the First Order. Much of the esoteric astrology taught in the Second Order is based on a fixed sidereal astrology rather than a tropical astrology.¹⁸ This is due to the fact that in the more popular tropical astrology, the signs

18. Sidereal astrology gives the position of a planet by constellation. Tropical astrology gives the position of a planet by sign.

19. "To recall some basic science, the seasons are the result of the slant of Earth's axis. . . . The spin of Earth makes it behave like a gyroscope (always tending to maintain the same angle), but because our planet is not perfectly round, it tends to wobble a little. One result of this wobble is that each year the Sun appears to have moved ever so slightly backward (against the backdrop of the relatively unmoving star) from where it was at the same point (e.g. at a solstice or Equinox point) the preceding year (at the rate of 10 every 71.5 years).

"This precession is the reason that the tropical zodiac, which most Western astrologers use, is a 'moving' zodiac: Following the admonitions of Ptolemy . . .

(the 30-degree divisions) of the zodiac are out of step with the constellations they are named after. This is the result of the precession of the equinoxes—that is, the equinoctial point (or the point of the zodiac where the sun is positioned when it annually crosses the equator on March 21) gradually moves through the zodiac in a reverse motion to that of the planets. So although the equinoctial point is called 0° Aries in tropical or moving astrology, the equinoctial point is really several degrees away from the constellation of Aries.¹⁹

In the fixed sidereal system of astrology emphasized in certain Order teachings, the signs coincide with the constellations that they are named after. Using this method, the star called Regulus,²⁰ said to coincide with 0° Leo, was selected as the beginning point on the zodiacal chart. This is the reason that the zodiacal attributions of certain teachings, such as the Minor Arcana of the Golden Dawn's tarot system, as well as that of the seventy-two divine names of the Shem ha-Mephoresh, all begin at 0° Leo.

the beginning of the zodiac—0° Aries—is located where the Sun is positioned during the spring (vernal) equinox. Thus each year the zodiac is moved very slightly. This movement keeps the zodiac aligned with the seasons, but it is always slipping backward with reference to the stars. This is disconcerting to anyone who feels that sign influence emanates from the constellations after which the signs of the zodiac take their names. However, if one switches over to one of the sidereal zodiacs (which align the zodiac with the stars), then the zodiac—which contains much seasonal symbolism—slips out of alignment with the seasons. The upshot of this is that it is possible to make a good argument for either system.”—James R. Lewis, *Astrology Encyclopedia* (Detroit, Mich.: Visible Ink Press, 1994), 431–432.

According to Nicholas de Vore, the tropical and sidereal zodiacs coincided in 254 B.C.E. *Encyclopedia of Astrology* (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1947), 308.

20. The star which is also called Cor Leonis, “the heart of the Lion.” *Regulus* means “Star of the Prince.” Regulus is one of four very bright fixed stars that Persians called “Royal Stars” and “Guardians of the Heavens.”

“The oldest version of the zodiac was without doubt measured from the fixed stars.”—Rupert Gleadow, *The Origins of the Zodiac* (New York: Castle Books, 1968), 28.

It is also of interest to note that the Golden Dawn's astrological correspondences of the planets that rule the decanates²¹ are not the same as those listed by Agrippa in his *de Occulta Philosophia* (1531) and used today by many modern astrologers.²² According to Agrippa's text, the first decan of each sign is ruled by the planet that rules that sign. The second decan is ruled by the ruling planet of the next sign of the elemental triplicity, and the third decan is ruled by the ruling planet of the final sign of the triplicity. Therefore, Aries is ruled in its three decanates as follows: The first decan is ruled by Aries' own ruling planet (Mars), the second by that of Leo (Sol, the Sun), and the third by that of Sagittarius (Jupiter). Leo is ruled by its own ruling planet (Sol), followed by that of Sagittarius (Jupiter), and finally by that of Aries (Mars).

The *Picatrix*, an influential thirteenth-century Latin grimoire translated from an older Arabic source called the *Ghayat al-Hakim*, lists the version used by Agrippa as the "Indian" system of decanates (*Picatrix*, Book II, chapter 12). However, it also lists the "Chaldean" system of decanates (*Picatrix*, Book II, chapter 11), which is a straightforward planetary cycle through the decans in this order: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna (the Moon)—and the cycle starts over again with Saturn. (Thus, the decans of Leo are ruled by Saturn, then Jupiter, then Mars. Next, the decans of Scorpio are ruled by Sol, then Venus, then Mercury, and so forth.) This system of decanates follows the ordering of the planetary attributions on the Qabalistic Tree of Life. It is also the decanate system employed by the Golden Dawn.²³

21. As in the decanates that correspond to the divine names of the Shem ha-Mephoresh.

22. See Cornelius Agrippa's *The Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, edited and annotated by Donald Tyson (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1993), 375–376.

23. Agrippa calls this system the planetary "faces." See Tyson's edition of *The Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, 359–360. At times Agrippa indicates that the faces are different from the decans, but at other times he seems to confuse the matter by indicating that they are one and the same.

One source for the Indian system is listed as a sixth-century Indian astrologer named Varahamihira.²⁴ One of the early sources of the Chaldean scheme is listed as Teukros of Babylon (Latin *Teucer*).²⁵ It is clear that the Golden Dawn maintains the Western Esoteric Tradition of astrology.

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Divination

The word *divination* is based upon the Latin word *divinatio*, which means "the faculty of foreseeing." The root word is itself based on a Latin word for "divine power" or "of the gods," and thus exposes a more subtle meaning, which is "to make divine." This sheds an entirely different light on the

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24. Varahamihira (505–587 C.E.) was also an astronomer, a philosopher, and a mathematician. He was the author of the *Pañca-siddhantika* ("Five Treatises"), a synopsis of Greek, Egyptian, Roman, and Indian astronomy.
 25. This arrangement was sometimes called the "Egyptian" system. See Gleadow, 182–183.

subject of divination. Far from being a superstitious practice, the art of divination reveals itself as a spiritual science that seeks to discover the divine significance behind “chance” events. And like the other magical arts, divination has existed as a tool for psychic development and spiritual health long before the development of modern psychology, which has often borrowed heavily from the techniques of ceremonial magic, putting new names on old magical ideas.

Historical Perspective

The history of divination is as old as humanity’s first awareness of the divine. Since humans were first able to discern a higher power that existed beyond the physical world, men and women strove to communicate with that eternal force that empowers the universe. Prayers and invocations to deities developed out of the human desire to talk to the divine—to worship the gods and petition them for favorable conditions. Ritual invocation, skrying, clairvoyance, and meditation all developed out of the human desire to listen to the divine; to let the gods speak to us and enrich humankind with a higher wisdom. Divination, too, developed as a means of interaction with the gods, a method by which one could interpret and comprehend the divine will.

In the ancient world, atmospheric signs such as rain, wind, and lightning were considered the precursors of major events—all of which had divine implications. In societies where warfare against other tribes and nations was a way of life, divination was often employed strategically, to petition the gods’ advice on the best course of action to take against one’s enemies. One of the earliest recorded forms of such a divination used militarily was the Mingling of Arrows mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel: “For the king of Babylon stood still at the crossways, at the head of the two ways, in order to resort to divination. He has shaken the arrows. He consulted with images and looked into the liver.”²⁶ The king put the names of his enemies on the arrows, placed them back into the quiver, and shook them up. Whichever arrow he then drew from the quiver bore the name of the enemy he would attack. (The second type of divination mentioned in the above quote was extispicy or the inspection of entrails,

26. Ezekiel 21:21.

a rather messy form of divination that dates back to a primitive time when nomadic tribes would move into a new region, but not before inspecting the viscera of animals to determine if the surrounding area was conducive to good health.)

At one time, divining arrows were employed in the great mosque at Mecca. One arrow was inscribed with the words, "My Lord hath commanded me." On a second arrow was written, "My Lord hath forbidden me." A third arrow was blank. If the first arrow was drawn, the diviner concluded that the enterprise in question had divine sanction. If the second arrow was drawn, the opposite conclusion was reached. If the blank arrow was drawn, the divination was started again until a decisive answer was reached.

The casting of lots (or sortilege) was an early form of divination frequently employed to determine a person's guilt or innocence in a criminal matter. The early Christians and Muslims often divined by opening a holy book (the Bible or Koran) and reading whatever portion of the text first appeared.

The Romans practiced a form of divination known as augury, which relied on interpreting omens such as atmospheric phenomenon, the flight of birds, etc.²⁷

The Purpose of Divination

The forms of divination that developed were as varied as the inventive minds from which they sprang. It often did not seem to matter what form the divination took; it was more important that the diviner (one who practices divination) be able to quiet the mind enough to attune with the higher forces and then perceive certain signs or symbols by means of an inner vision that could interpret their divine implications.

Divination can open up the mind to the mechanics of the spiritual realm behind the visible universe. The various methods of divination are good exercises for developing one's psychic faculties of intuition and imagination.

27. See "From God to My Soul; Reading the Auspices" by David Godwin, published in *The Golden Dawn Journal, Book One: Divination*, edited by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), 203-212.

The role of divination in our spiritual growth involves the development of a symbol system whereby one can address and communicate with the Gods, the archetypes of the collective unconscious. The purpose in practicing divination is to discover an interior guidance through building a bridge between a synchronistic pattern of symbols in physical time and space and the timeless world of the archetypal psyche. When one has awakened one's sense of the working out of interior archetypes in external events, divination has served one of its primary purposes in psychological transformation.²⁸

Two forms of divination are taught in the First Order of the Golden Dawn. These are geomancy and tarot.

Geomancy

The word *geomancy* comes from the Greek words *ge*, "earth," and *man-teia*, or "prophecy." It basically means "earth divination" or divination by the signs of the earth. This traditional Western divinatory technique is based on intuitive contact with the energies of the Earth. Preliminary information on divination using geomancy is given to Golden Dawn students in the grade of Zelator.

The earliest form of geomancy probably originated in Islamic North Africa in the eight or ninth century. The first European handbook on the art was *Ars Geomantiae*, written by medieval Spanish scholar Hugo de Santalla (1125 C.E.). The popularity of geomancy spread throughout Europe from the high Middle Ages until the end of the Enlightenment. "In a Europe which held a profound belief in the influence of Astrology in daily life, Geomancy seemed to provide a way to erect what amounted to a horoscope with no ephemerides, no astronomical instruments, indeed with no other equipment than a stick and a bit of earth."²⁹

Several authors influential to Western Esoteric thought have written about geomancy. These include Pietro de Abano, Agrippa, Robert Fludd,

28. Steven Marshall, "The Psychology of Divination," published in *The Golden Dawn Journal, Book One: Divination*, 10.

29. Forrest, "Mysteria Geomantica," *The Golden Dawn Journal: Book One: Divination*, 194.

and John Heydon. In the twentieth century, the subject was taken up by Franz Hartman, Israel Regardie, Stephen Skinner, and more recently by John Michael Greer.

According to *The Oracle of Geomancy*:

The techniques of geomancy are many and varied. They include inspecting the configurations made by scattered pebbles, the blowing of dust upon a smooth surface such as a marble tabletop, the strewing of grains of sand, the throwing of handfuls of palm kernels or seeds, (themselves born of the earth), or by making marks haphazardly in the ground with a stick. Divination by marking the earth or casting things on the ground also developed into the interpretation of lines or dots made more or less haphazardly on paper with a pencil.³⁰

Geomancy can also be performed by tossing coins, rolling dice or, as indicated in the quotation above, by poking holes in the earth with a stick and taking note of the number of holes made. The usual method of geomancy employed by the Golden Dawn is accomplished using pen and paper to generate random numbers of dots.

No matter which of these methods is employed, the primary point to keep in mind is that geomantic divination always entails the random generation of sixteen figures, known as tetragrams, which are then interpreted in a specific manner. Geomancy is one of a number of forms of divination that are founded on a binary or base-two number system. (The I Ching or Chinese Book of Changes is another example of this form of binary-based divination.) The process used to create a geomantic divination is actually similar to the simple act of flipping a coin. Certain random events, said to be influenced or controlled by spiritual forces when combined with the unconscious human psyche, can be made to generate one of two definite outcomes. If a specific significance or meaning is attributed to the outcome, a clear interpretation can be given and any divinatory question clearly answered.

The actual process is as follows. There are sixteen possible geomantic tetragrams. Each tetragram is a four-part figure consisting of four

30. Stephen Skinner, *The Oracle of Geomancy* (New York: Warner Destiny Books, 1977), 10.

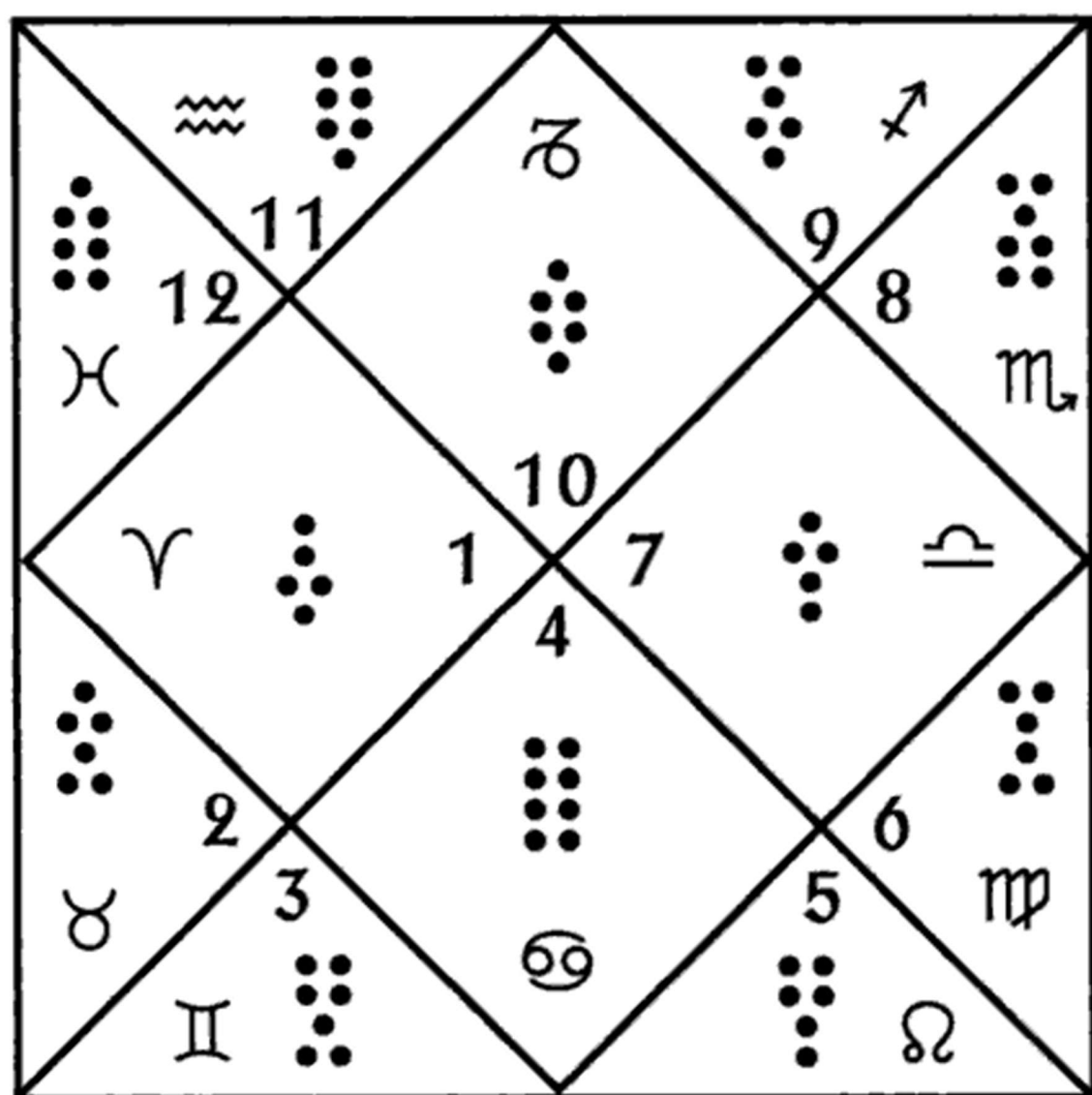


Figure 22: Geomantic tetragrams on a square zodiacal chart

lines—each line consists of one or two “dots.” Enlisting any of the methods given above, the geomancer generates sixteen random numbers, noting whether each number is odd or even. An odd number is given one “dot,” while an even number is given two “dots.” The sixteen numbers result in four tetragrams known as the Four Mothers. From these initial four figures, a number of other figures are created, until at length, a total of sixteen tetragrams are formed. Simple yes/no questions can be quickly answered by interpreting the final tetragrams created. If a more in-depth answer is required, the first twelve figures are then placed in the various houses of a square zodiacal chart so that their astrological implications can be interpreted (see figure 22).

The sixteen geomantic tetragrams are included among the correspondences of the Golden Dawn’s Enochian system. They are also attributed to the sixteen Princes and Princesses of the Lesser Angles of the Enochian Tablets.³¹ The tetragrams are often used in the Second Order as skrying symbols, and they are also used to create geomantic sigils that can be painted on talismans in order to attract the energies they represent.

Tarot

The tarot or “Book T,” as it is sometimes called, is a pictorial book of ageless, esoteric wisdom. For centuries it has been used by magicians, occultists, and mystics for the purposes of divination and meditation. Like the Qabalah, the tarot is a complete and elaborate system for describing the hidden forces behind the manifest universe. Not only is it the key to all occult science, but also a map for uncovering the various parts of the human psyche. Tarot cards can be thought of as hieroglyphs of the Western Mystery Tradition.

The traditional tarot consists of a pack of seventy-eight cards comprised of two primary divisions. The Major Arcana contains twenty-two trump or key cards that tell the story of the soul. The Minor Arcana has a total of fifty-six lesser cards divided into four suits of fourteen cards each. Each suit is further divided into ten numbered or pip cards and four court cards.

31. Forrest, “Mysteria Geomantica,” *The Golden Dawn Journal: Book One: Divination*, 199–200.

The exact origins of the tarot are unclear. It has been claimed by some that the tarot has existed since the time of the Egyptians and even earlier, its knowledge dating as far back as Atlantis. Another theory says that the great esoteric minds that witnessed the burning of the library at Alexandria met in secret and decided to save the wisdom of the ages from being lost by hiding it in a game of cards. Still others say that the tarot came from the Far East or from the Gypsies. As romantic as all of these stories may be, they remain to this day unencumbered by facts.

The tarot does not predate the ordinary deck of playing cards, which were introduced into Europe soon after 1375 C.E. The forerunners of the European playing cards were probably created in Persia or India and brought into Europe around 1370. One early ancestor, known as Mamluk playing cards, featured a deck of either fifty-two or fifty-six elegant designs containing four suits: swords, polo sticks, cups, and coins. Early Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese decks were based on the Mamluk model, although the suit of polo sticks was changed to batons or clubs. It is unclear whether the Arabic deck contained twelve court cards as in modern playing cards, or sixteen court cards as in the tarot.

The twenty-two trump cards of the Major Arcana appear to be a later creation, as well as a purely European one. The earliest surviving tarot trumps still in existence date from about 1450 C.E. What was thought to be the earliest tarot deck, the Gringonneur Tarot painted in 1392 for Charles VI, has recently been dated to only the middle of the fifteenth century and is of Venetian origin. The oldest known tarot deck was painted for the Visconti-Sforza family in Milan around 1428 C.E.³² The name "trump" was taken from the word *trionfi*, meaning "triumph."

During the first part of the fifteenth century, the tarot was used almost exclusively at European courts of nobility, for it had become a pastime reserved for the aristocracy. However, there is little evidence to suggest that it was used for fortunetelling or any occult purpose—it was considered a game. The earliest decks were hand-painted. With the invention of woodblock printing in the fifteenth century, tarot cards became more

32. Available today as *Visconti Tarots*, published by Lo Scarabeo and distributed in the U. S. by Llewellyn Publications.

common. In 1781, interest in the tarot gained momentum when Antoine Court de Gebelin, a freemason and Protestant minister, claimed that the tarot's trump cards were taken from a secret Egyptian book called "The Book of Thoth." Gebelin's influential *Le Monde Primitif* was the source of many of the fanciful histories concerning the origins of the tarot.

In 1860, Eliphas Levi published his magnum opus of magical theory, the *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*. Levi was certainly aware of the tarot theories of Gebelin and others. Levi's own view, that the tarot was an ancient esoteric book of spiritual wisdom, was undoubtedly confirmed in his mind when he drew a remarkable comparison between the twenty-two trumps of the tarot and the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet:

The Italian Tarot, of which the lost Gothic originals are much to be regretted, connects by the disposition of its figures with the Hebrew alphabet in use after the captivity . . . We also see what diverse significations are included in the twenty-two Keys which form the universal alphabet of the Tarot, together with the truth of our affirmation, that all secrets of Kabbalah and Magic, all mysteries of the elder world, all science of the patriarchs, all historical traditions of primeval times, are enclosed in this hieroglyphical book of Thoth, Enoch or Cadmus.³³

The occult revival of the nineteenth century promoted serious study of the tarot and its Qabalistic associations. Occultists and magicians began to view the tarot as the quintessential tool for meditation and esoteric studies.

In a small booklet published in 1888 called *The Tarot: Its Occult Significance, Use in Fortune-Telling, and Method of Play, Etc.*, S. L. MacGregor Mathers stated that the word "tarot" (or *taro*) was an anagram for the words that pointed to its occult meaning: *tora*, or the Hebrew word for "law"; *troa*, or Hebrew for "gate"; *rota*, which was Latin for "wheel"; *orat* was Latin for "something that speaks"; *Taor*, the Egyptian Goddess of Darkness; and *Ator*, the Egyptian Venus. This implied that the tarot is

33. Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1995), 334–335, 342.

a gate hidden in the darkness for those who are unable to tap into its riches. It is a gate of initiation, just as Venus or Ator is the gate or door of initiation. The tarot is a book that speaks, and what it describes is divine law and the eternal wheel of universal cycles that power the manifest universe.

Like the Qabalah, the cards of the tarot came to be seen as a type of "esoteric filing cabinet" in which a vast array of occult correspondences could be categorized and stored. The four suits of the tarot were attributed to the four worlds of the Qabalah: Atziluth—the divine world; Briah—the creative world, Yetzirah—the formative world, and Assiah—the material world.³⁴ The pip cards of the Minor Arcana, numbered one through ten, were easily assigned to the ten sephiroth of the Qabalistic Tree of Life.

Whether or not the original inventors of the tarot deliberately placed Qabalistic symbolism into the cards is unimportant. The fact remains that the two systems of Qabalah and tarot are so strikingly similar that they easily compliment and describe each other, making a perfect and coherent system for psychic/spiritual growth.

The Tarot of the Golden Dawn

The tarot deck used by the Golden Dawn was based upon S. L. Mathers' research and Moina Mathers' subsequent drawings of the cards. Mathers built his system of correspondences from the earlier observations of Eliphas Levi, although he did not use Levi's particular attributions of the Hebrew letters to the cards. The tarot cards used by the Stella Matutina were slightly modified from those of the original Golden Dawn, especially in regard to the court cards. According to some sources, Dr. Wynn Westcott, who helped design the original Golden Dawn tarot, also assisted Dr. Felkin with some of the changes made in the Stella Matutina deck almost two decades after the original was drawn up.

34. The four worlds are also attributed to the elements: Atziluth—fire; Briah—water; Yetzirah—air; and Assiah—earth. These also correspond to the tarot suits: Atziluth—wands; Briah—cups; Yetzirah—swords; and Assiah—pentacles.

In the Golden Dawn system of tarot, each tarot suit of the Minor Arcana contains ten numbered cards as in the modern playing cards, but there are four instead of three royal or court cards: King, Queen, Prince, and Princess.³⁵ Thus, there are a total of sixteen court cards. (In some decks these cards are referred to as Knight, Queen, Emperor, and Knave or Page.) The four suits of the tarot are Wands, comparable to clubs and attributed to the element of fire; cups, analogous to hearts and attributed to the element of water; swords, comparable to spades and attributed to the element of air; and pentacles, equivalent to diamonds and attributed to the element of earth.

Except for the Aces, the numbered cards of the Minor Arcana are also assigned to the thirty-six decanates of the zodiac.

The Qabalistic sephiroth are represented by the Minor Arcana cards numbered one through ten. These symbolize objective centers of energy emanating from the divine. They are static, fixed points of force whose qualities are impartial and immobile. These cards allude to the unchangeable parts of the human psyche—those components that are inherent to the human mind.

The twenty-two paths and their corresponding trump cards, on the other hand, are active and moving. They are subjective conduits or energy channels that run between the sephiroth, connecting the spheres. These are the cards that tell the story of the human soul on its eternal quest for wisdom. They represent the variety of experiences that spiritual seekers undergo as they travel the pathways of the Tree of Life, encountering the differences that occur between one sephirah and the next. They also represent the energies of the planets, the signs of the zodiac, and the elements of the ancients. The trump cards are considered true initiatory forces, having both an esoteric or spiritual meaning as well as an exoteric or mundane meaning that is used in divination.

Contained within the tarot is a complete mythological world—a realm of symbol, allegory, and metaphor. The tarot cards are snapshots of the subconscious mind at various stages in its evolutionary growth. The

35. The Court Cards are also attributed to the elements: Kings—fire; Queens—water; Princes—air; and Princesses—earth.

human figures of the Major Arcana can be compared to various archetypes that the individual assumes in different stages along one's spiritual journey. These cards can also be used to explore and connect with many archetypes that are unfamiliar or less developed within a person's psyche.

All systems of divination are used to define a quantitative pattern or paradigm of the universe. A tarot deck is a perfect tool for divination and personal growth because the universe is completely defined, patterned, and mapped out within the context of the seventy-eight cards of the deck. In a divination, the card layout or spread used can be compared to the house divisions in an astrological chart—that is, they are relative divisions of the universe that represent basic fields of activity. In a divination, the “chance” selection of a card determines which aspect of the universe should be looked at in relation to the question or subject of the reading.

The elemental grade ceremonies of the Golden Dawn contain descriptions of certain tarot trumps. In the Order system, preliminary information on the tarot is given to students in the grade of Practicus. In the First Order, simple card spreads, such as the Celtic Cross method, are taught.³⁶ Students are expected to memorize all Qabalistic and astrological correspondences of the tarot cards and be able to perform readings with them.

Adepts of the Second Order are expected to draw (or at the very least color) their own versions of all seventy-eight tarot cards.

In the higher grades of the R. R. et A. C., tarot divination is performed using a method known as the Opening of the Key, a long and detailed technique that requires five separate card spreads: 1) the formation of the Tetragrammaton or four-lettered name of God, 2) the twelve zodiacal houses, 3) the twelve signs of the zodiac, 4) the thirty-six decanates, and 5) the Qabalistic Tree of Life. A complete Adept-level ritual for invoking the higher, divine forces prior to a divination is outlined in the Order document known as “Z-2: The Formula of the Magic of Light.”³⁷

36. The Celtic Cross spread was made popular by Golden Dawn Adept A. E. Waite in his book *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*. The tarot deck designed by Waite and painted by artist Pamela Coleman Smith, commonly known as the Rider-Waite Deck, is the single most popular tarot deck in the world.

37. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn* (6th ed., St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), 393–395.

In the subgrades of Adeptus Minor there is also a great deal of esoteric information about the celestial tarot in a paper by Mathers entitled "The Tree of Life as Projected in a Solid Sphere."

Other Forms of Divination

Divination is also performed in the Second Order grades using the more complex methods of the Ring and Disk and Enochian Chess. Nevertheless, tarot remains the preferred method.

FURTHER READING

The Golden Dawn Journal, Book I: Divination by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero, (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994).

Earth Divination, Earth Magic by John Michael Greer (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1999).

Golden Dawn Magical Tarot by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 2000).

The Qabalistic Tarot by Robert Wang (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1983).

The Book of Tokens: Tarot Meditations by Paul Foster Case (Los Angeles, Calif.: Builders of the Adytum, 1968).

Alchemy

Cabala and Alchemy

Give thee the medicine most high.
Also the Stone of the Wise,
In which alone the foundation lies,
As is plain before thine eyes
Betimes in these effigies.³⁸

38. From Steffan Michelspacher, *Cabala* (1616), quoted in Stanislas Klossowski De Rola, *The Golden Game, Alchemical Engravings of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 58.

The word *alchemy* is a term comprised of the Arabic article *al* and the noun *khem*. The latter word relates to *Khem*, the Coptic name of Egypt. Alchemy thus means "that which pertains to Egypt." The words *alchemy* and *chemistry* are a reminder of the scientific legacy of Egypt. According to an eleventh-century encyclopedic dictionary known as the *Suidas*, the word *alchemy* meant "the knowledge of the Egyptian Art, Chemi or Cham or the Black Land, which was the ancient name for Egypt."³⁹ After astrology, alchemy is one of the oldest sciences known to humanity.

Historical Perspective

The origins of Western alchemy date back to the beginnings of the Hellenistic period (300 B.C.E.–300 C.E.). One of the oldest known alchemical texts was *Physika*, written by Bolos Democritos in Egypt in approximately 200 B.C.E.⁴⁰ Another was written by Zosimos of Panopolis (Egypt), entitled the *Divine Art of Making Gold and Silver*.⁴¹ Medieval authors often called alchemy the "Hermetic Art" suggesting that the origin was none other than the fabled master Hermes Trismegistus himself. After their conquest of Egypt in the seventh century, the Arabs absorbed the knowledge of the Alexandrian alchemists.

Among the most influential Arabic practitioners of the alchemical art was the Persian Jabir ibn Hayyan (721–815 C.E.), who wrote more than 2,000 alchemical works and was known as "the father of Arabic chemistry." Possibly the greatest Arabic alchemist was ar-Razi (850–924), a physician in Baghdad. Whereas Greek physicians emphasized the creation of herbal elixirs for healing, Arabic alchemists focused on the quest to produce gold in addition to the creation of mineral elixirs for medical use.

39. C. J. S. Thompson, *The Lure and Romance of Alchemy* (New York, N.Y.: Bell Publishing Company, 1990), 10.

40. E. J. Holmyard, *Alchemy* (New York, N.Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., 1990), 25.

41. Westcott, "Flying Roll No. VII: Alchemy" published in Francis King's *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic, and Alchemy* by S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others (Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books, 1987), 179.

As with many of the sciences, Western Europe owes a great deal to the medieval Arabs for their knowledge of the practice of alchemy and the careful preservation of Greek and Arabic alchemical texts, which they brought to Spain in the eighth century. From the ninth to the eleventh century, Spain became a repository of alchemical knowledge. European scholars were intrigued by the Hermetic Art and by 1350 several alchemical tracts were being copied in monastic scriptoria.

A fourteenth-century Spanish alchemist took the name of Geber Abinhaen (the Latinized form of Jabir ibn Hayyan) to benefit from the earlier author's fame and give authority to his work—the tone of which was European rather than Arabic. Geber's books included *Summa perfectionis magisterii* or "The Sum of Perfection or the Perfect Magistry" (1678), and *Liber fornacum* or "The Book of Furnaces" (1678). In a subject where riddles and obscurity were the norm, Geber wrote some of the most lucid works of alchemical theory and the clearest instructions for laboratory work and metallurgy available at the time. His influential writings were widely read.

Important European alchemists included Dominican bishop/philosopher Albertus Magnus or "Albert the Great" (1200–1280), the most prolific author of his day and a champion of natural science; Englishman Roger Bacon (1220–1292), a chief advocate of experimental science in the Middle Ages; and Frenchman Nicholas Flamel (1330–1418), who studied astrology and Qabalah in addition to alchemy, and claimed to have succeeded in making gold.

Possibly the greatest alchemist of all was German physician Aureolus Paracelsus (1493–1541). He took the name *para-Celsus* ("beyond Celsus") because he regarded himself as greater than Celsus, the famous first-century Roman physician. He maintained the Hermetic view that human life was inseparable from the life of the cosmos. Paracelsus is credited with starting what would later become the science of pharmacology.

The classical texts of alchemy are rich in symbolism and allegory. Some of these treatises contained little more than alchemical prints and illustrations. *Atalanta Fugiens*, or "Atalanta Fleeing" by Michael Maier (1568–1622), an early Rosicrucian, and *The Book of Lambsprinck* (1625)

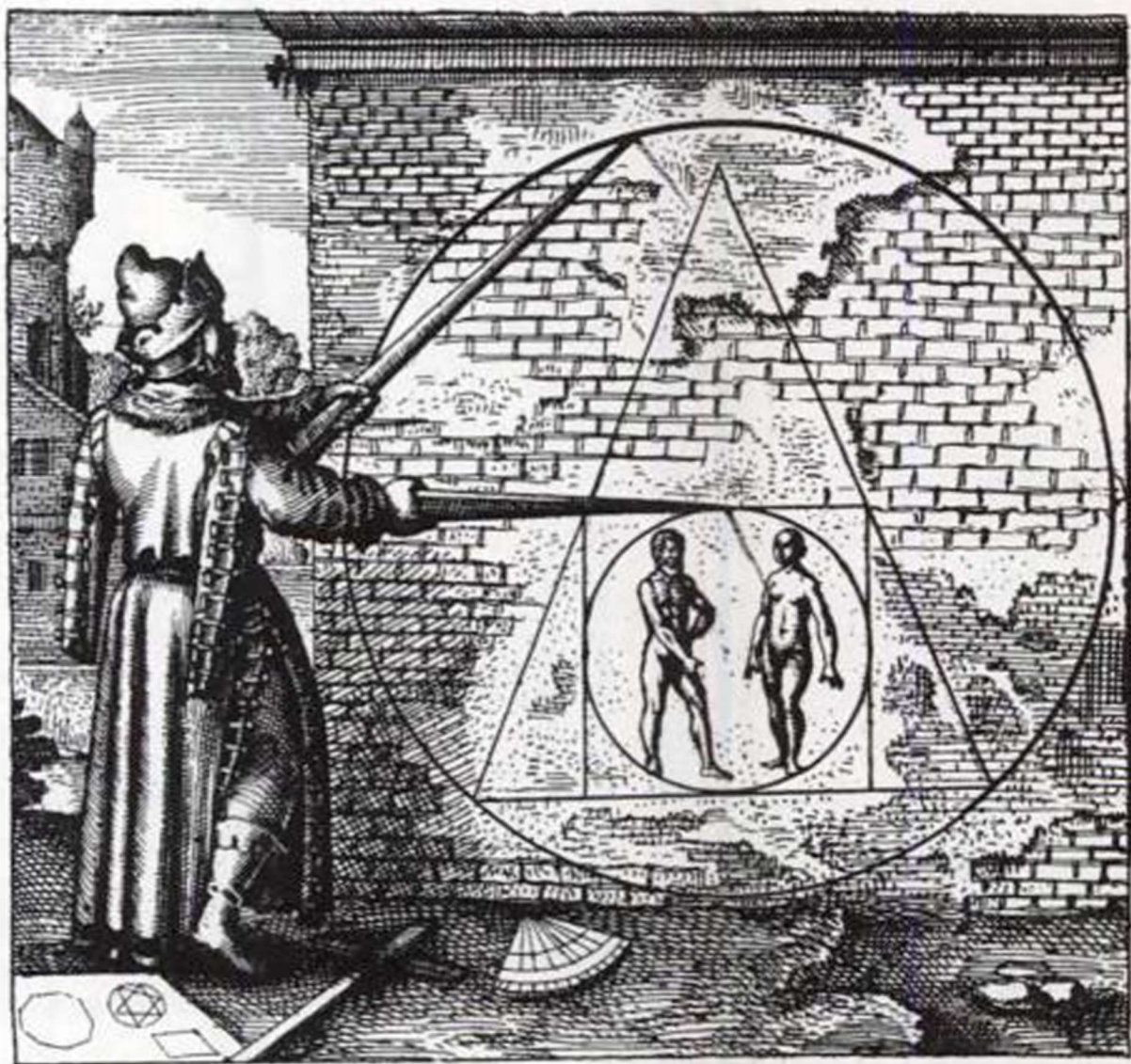


Figure 23: *Squaring the circle: an alchemical drawing from "Atalanta Fugiens"*

are examples of alchemical picture books (see figure 23). Another is *Splendor Solis* or "The Splendor of the Sun," attributed to Saloman Trismosin (1598). Trismosin was said to have visited alchemical adepts and claimed success in his alchemical operations through "kabbalistic and magical books in the Egyptian language." Alchemical works that contained numerous illustrations were far less concerned with the practical aspects of laboratory alchemy than with the esoteric knowledge of spiritual alchemy and the sublimation of the human soul. These books would become the illustrated textbooks of the Rosicrucian movement. "Alchemy is not merely an art or science to teach metallic transmutation, so much as a true and solid science that teaches how to know the center of all things, which in the divine language is called the Spirit of Life."⁴² Contemplation of alchemical diagrams and pictorial symbolism is meant to intrigue and inspire the viewer on many levels—conscious as well as subconscious—and speak directly to the human soul on the true nature of the alchemist's "gold."

The Principles of Alchemy

In its usual limited definition, alchemy is an empirical science that concerns itself with the transmutation of base metals into gold. For many, the word *alchemy* conjures up an image of a crude laboratory where foolhardy pseudo-scientists labor to turn lead into gold so that they may spend their lives living in luxury. Unfortunately, the history of alchemy is not without its con artists and "puffers."⁴³ However, alchemy's true definition encompasses the transformation of humanity to a higher stage of spiritual purity. The treatises of alchemy are not only chemical in nature, but also mystical and magical. Certainly many alchemists left behind a vast amount of information to prove that one version of alchemy was primarily practical and chemical in nature. This was the alchemy full of experiments and laboratory equipment: furnaces, bellows, stills, alembics, curcurbits, condensers, and glass beakers.

42. Pierre-Jean Fabre, *Les Secrets chimiques*, 1636, quoted in Stanislas Klossowski De Rola, *Alchemy the Secret Art* (New York: Bounty Books, 1973), 8.

43. A derogatory name given by true alchemists to those who, in ignorance of the sublime purpose of the art, would abuse it in the attempt to make "fool's gold."

Nevertheless, the principal interest of many alchemical philosophers was spiritual. These alchemists did not look merely for the substance of gold; they sought to give the quality of gold to their own being—to transmute the base metals (the gross and impure parts of their own nature) into spiritual gold (divine wisdom). To them, gold—the metal that never tarnishes and cannot be corrupted by fire or water—was a symbol of illumination and salvation.

The outer body of alchemy is chemistry; it is in fact the ancestor of modern chemistry. The specialized fields of herbalism, mineralogy, natural science, chemistry, pharmacology, and medicine all evolved from the mother science known as alchemy. But in addition to being a science, this ancient art is also a philosophy. Alchemy is a science that is based on multiplication and the natural phenomenon of growth; it is the process of increasing and improving that which already exists. Alchemy is evolution, the raising of vibrations.

Practitioners of the art considered nature to be the greatest alchemist of all; causing the latent seeds of all life (whether animal, vegetable, or mineral) to multiply and grow through the act of transmutation. One objective of the alchemists was to carry out in the laboratory, as far as possible, the processes that nature carries out in the manifest universe. Not only did they try to duplicate these natural operations, they tried to reproduce them in a comparatively short period of time—speeding up processes that nature takes vast amounts of time to complete:

The metallurgist's outlook on metals differs greatly from the alchemist's view. The latter looks upon metals as living things while they are still unmade into some permanent form, just as in the same manner as a farmer will look upon corn before it is made into bread. Both contain the seed of growth. Under varying conditions, this seed can be transformed by nature, or it may fail, but it is always nature that does this work. The farmer knows the differing conditions by which plants may be made to multiply, and the alchemist likewise must know what treatment the metals demand from nature to give forth their special and characteristic result, and the virtues of the right metal needed to produce the Philosopher's Stone. . . . To properly understand how the alchemist's mind worked, it is necessary to

know that he believed that metals have life of their own equal to animals and vegetables.⁴⁴

Much of what has been said thus far about alchemy has been primarily about physical, laboratory, or practical alchemy. This type of alchemy is focused on the transformation of metals and minerals, as well as animal and vegetable matter, into superior substances, stones, medicines, and healing elixirs. But of far more interest to the Golden Dawn student is the type of alchemy known as theoretical or spiritual alchemy, which deals with human evolution. However, both types of alchemy, practical and theoretical, stress that the alchemist must strive to purify and perfect his own spiritual nature, just as he strives to perfect the subject of his alchemical experiments.⁴⁵ It is impossible to refine one without refining the other.

Alchemy is the art and science of transformation. This is not an easily understood art, because the classic alchemical texts were deliberately written in fables and riddles to protect the sacred art from possible religious persecution and the ignorance of the profane. Take, for example, the following alchemical verse from Philalethes' *The Marrow of Alchemy*:

To Saturn, Mars with bonds of love is tied,
Who is by him devoured of mighty force,
Whose spirit Saturn's body doth divide,
And both combining yield a secret source,
From whence doth flow a water wondrous bright,
In which the sun doth set and lose its light.⁴⁶

In this poem, Saturn refers to antimony (a poison which in certain doses acts as a powerful medicine), while Mars is iron, and the sun represents gold. The primal medium of alchemical expression is through the use of allegory and mythological symbolism, which can be interpreted

44. Lapidus, *In Pursuit of Gold* (New York, N.Y.: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1976), 18.

45. This view is certainly true of today's practicing alchemists, although it is not necessarily true of all ancient or medieval alchemists, some of whom may have been working for mercenary or profiteering motives. Others were no doubt inspired with the spirit of scientific inquiry.

46. Quoted in Lapidus, 78.

simultaneously at a material as well as a mystical level. In the esoteric jargon of theoretical alchemy, even the basic laboratory equipment of practical alchemy become symbols for various spiritual principles.

The primary goal of alchemy is to bring all things, especially humanity, to their preordained state of perfection. To that end, alchemical theory states that eternal wisdom remains dormant in humanity so long as a mundane state of ignorance and superficiality exists. The objective of alchemy is the uncovering of this inner wisdom, and the removal of veils and obstacles between the mind and its intrinsically pure divine source.

One of the key tenets of alchemy is that all things in the universe are ultimately derived from one primary material called the *prima materia* or "first matter"—complex substances are different from each other only because they contain compound substances and different attributes. Once these different attributes are removed through the alchemical process, the first matter is revealed. This is one of the initial steps in creating the Philosopher's Stone, which represents true spiritual attainment and illumination.

The basic tenets of alchemy can be described as follows:

1. The universe has a divine origin. The cosmos is an emanation of One Absolute Divine Being, therefore All is One.
2. All physical manifestation exists by virtue of a Law of Polarity or Duality. Any concept can be sufficiently defined in relation to its opposite: male-female, sun-moon, spirit-body, etc.
3. All physical manifestation, whether vegetable, animal, or mineral (the so-called Three Kingdoms), is composed of spirit, soul, and body: the three Alchemic Principles of mercury, sulfur, and salt.
4. All alchemical work, whether practical laboratory work or spiritual alchemy, consists of three basic evolutionary processes: separation, purification, and cohobation (or recombination). These three evolutionary processes are also the work of nature.
5. All matter is composed of the four elements of fire (thermal energy), water (liquid), air (gas), and earth (solid). The knowledge and

skillful use of the four elements is an essential part of alchemical work.

6. The Quintessence or "fifth essence" is contained within the four elements but is not one of them. It is one of the three essential Principles, also called the Philosophic Mercury.
7. Everything moves toward its preordained state of perfection.

In its highest form, alchemy:

. . . pertains to a hidden reality of the highest order which constitutes the underlying essence of all truths and all religions. The perfection of this essence is called Absolute; it can be perceived and realized, as the Beauty of Beauty, the Love of Love and the High Most High, only if consciousness is radically altered and transmuted from the ordinary (lead-like) level of everyday perception to a subtle (gold-like) level of perception, so that every object is perceived in its archetypal form, which is contained within the Absolute. . . . Alchemy is a rainbow bridging the chasm between earthly and heavenly planes, between matter and spirit. Like a rainbow, it may appear within reach, only to recede if one chases it merely to find a pot of gold. The sacred secret, ancient and profound science of alchemy, the royal or sacerdotal art, also called Hermetic philosophy, conceals, in esoteric texts and enigmatic emblems, the means of penetrating the very secrets of Nature, Life and Death, of Unity, Eternity and Infinity.⁴⁷

Alchemy in the Golden Dawn

It is spiritual alchemy, as opposed to the purely chemical art, that the Golden Dawn stresses. The initiation of an aspiring magician into the Neophyte grade commences the spiritual/alchemical process. The Neophyte is the base material (the lead) that is to be transmuted into gold by the art of the Hermetic path. Further initiations into the elemental grades are analogous to the alchemical processes of separation and purification.

Initiation into the Portal and Adept grades represents the cohobation or recombination of the primary elemental constituents of the magician's psyche into a purified whole. Alchemical references and symbolism

47. Klossowski De Rola, *Alchemy the Secret Art*, 7.

throughout the initiation ceremonies of these grades become overt. But the process of alchemical transformation does not end there. The Adept must incorporate the Quintessence of Spirit into his or her being, an endeavor which may take a lifetime to achieve. This Great Work, or the quest for spiritual gold, is a long undertaking. Although the goal may be distant, every step along the path is infinitely rewarding.

In the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn, students are required to study the various terms, symbols, and principles of alchemy. They are not required to practice laboratory alchemy, but they are to take up the study of spiritual alchemy.

In the Second Order teachings, one of the Z-2 formulas of the Magic of Light outlines a practical alchemical experiment that is performed in a full ritual setting.⁴⁸

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Jung and the Alchemical Imagination by Jeffrey Raff (York Beach, Maine: Nicolas-Hays, Inc., 2000).

48. See Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 395–400.

Skrying and Astral Work

The word *skry* is derived from the old English word *descry*, meaning “to see” or “to observe.” It refers to a form of clairvoyance that usually employs mirrors, crystals, or other gazing devices to aid a person’s concentration, train their psychic abilities, and allow spiritual visions to come through into normal waking consciousness. It is the conscious act of perceiving events that lie outside the reach of the normal senses through subconscious means. Skrying involves seeing not with the physical eyes but through the mind’s eye, into the astral world—the invisible blueprint that lies behind all physical manifestation. A person who skrys is often referred to as a seer or a skryer.

Historical Perspective

For centuries seers have gazed into crystals, mirrors, flames, water, and an array of other skrying tools. A bowl of water, an oil lamp, buffed metal, polished gemstone, or any other reflective surface are among the various items that have been employed for this purpose.

In ancient Greece, seers often gazed into bodies of fresh water that were specially revered for the purpose of skrying. In his book *Description of Greece*, geographer Pausanias (143–176 C.E.) described a skrying spring in Patrae:

[T]hey tie a mirror to a fine cord, and let it down so far that it shall not plunge into the spring, but merely graze the surface of the water with its rim. Then, after praying to the goddess and burning incense, they look into the mirror, and it shows them the sick person either living or dead. So truthful is this water.⁴⁹

So venerated were these bodies of water that one stream at Taenarum was said to have lost its value as a place for skrying after a woman washed her clothes in it.

The Romans, on the other hand, seemed to place little value on skrying. But in the Islamic world, as well as in medieval Europe, skrying was common. European skryers often risked condemnation by the church.

49. Quoted by Christopher McIntosh, from an article published in Richard Cavendish’s *Encyclopedia of the Unexplained, Magic, Occultism and Parapsychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), 222.

One famous magician whose skrying work had a great influence on the founders of the Golden Dawn was Dr. John Dee (1527–1608), a scholar and philosopher who was no less than Queen Elizabeth's personal astrologer. Using a skrying crystal, Dee and his associate Edward Kelly, who was the actual seer of the two, recorded numerous visions of angels. Their work would become the foundation of Enochian magic.

In the nineteenth century, the crystal skryings of Rosicrucian seer Frederick Hockley would also have a profound and immediate influence on the creators of the Golden Dawn, who were his contemporaries.

The Principles of Skrying

In chapter 3, we discussed one of the laws of magic that revolved around Levi's idea of the astral light, an invisible and fluidic substance that permeates everything in the cosmos. The subtle manipulation of this astral substance is one of the essential procedures of magic.

The Qabalah teaches that everything in the universe is created or "pre-fabricated" in the astral world of Yetzirah before it manifests in the physical world. The astral plane is a level of reality that is higher than the physical world, but lower than the divine or spiritual world. It is a place that is in between—a realm of reflections, images, and dreams. This realm is the invisible blueprint that lies behind all physical form. All things manifest in the astral world before they manifest in the physical world.

The astral plane is sometimes called the Treasure House of Images and is said to encompass the Akashic Record or the Akashic Library. This is a part of the astral said to contain all the memories and experiences of humanity over the course of history—embedded within the substance of the ether. The Akashic Record exists outside of our concept of time and space, thus it contains information about future events as well as past memories. It is available to those seers who have achieved a certain level of psychic purity and skill at skrying, but during sporadic occurrences, less-developed psyches are afforded brief and sometimes distorted glances into the Record. This astral "stockpile" of images can be used by skilled seers to cull knowledge that is universal and timeless. In spite of

this, the seer must ever guard against astral illusion or self-deception. A skryer must be able to learn the difference between astral fact and astral fiction. This is why skrying is a skill that must be finely honed, carefully practiced, and constantly tested for veracity.

Astral work is a very important tool for learning how things operate in the nonphysical worlds. With it the magician learns to contact spiritual realms, examine their landscape, and bring back valuable information. What we are talking about here is controlled astral visions—meaningful and intense experiences that are completely understandable. In these visions the skryer maintains complete control and all of his or her powers of choice, willpower, and judgment. Through these experiences, the magician is able to reach the deepest levels of what Carl Jung called the collective unconscious or what Hermetic philosophers called *Anima Mundi*—the soul of the world (see figure 9, page 76).

No matter what skrying device or clairvoyant aid is used, the seer perceives skryed data only through the mind. The mind then translates this information into a form that the normal consciousness can comprehend. The subconscious mind communicates to the conscious mind in symbols or sensations. In a skrying, the mind translates skryed information into an image, a dynamic vision, a sense impression, or even an audible sensation.⁵⁰

Astral Work in the Golden Dawn

Skrying and astral projection in the Golden Dawn tradition can be described as a form of self-hypnosis which uses symbols in order to cause changes in consciousness. From these higher levels of consciousness the magician often tries to see the underlying causes of things—to work at a problem from a higher angle or perspective—to get inside the machinery of the universe and see just what makes it tick.

In the Outer Order grades of the Golden Dawn, students are encouraged to contemplate and meditate on various symbols that are associated with their respective grades. Yet they are not encouraged to use these

50. Hearing sounds or voices is considered *clairaudience*, as opposed to *clairvoyance*.

images as skrying devices or perform actual skryings at this point in their magical development, just as they are not encouraged to take on god-forms. All such astral work is taught and performed only in the Second Order. The symbols utilized in skryings can be anything—Tattva cards, elemental or alchemical triangles, tarot cards, astrological symbols, geomantic tetragrams, sigils, Enochian pyramids, etc. All of these symbols may be used as astral doorways for visionary work.

The Second Order of the R. R. et A. C. employs three methods of clairvoyance, although they are not easily distinguished from one another. They are Skrying in the Spirit Vision (or simply skrying), Traveling in the Spirit Vision (astral traveling or astral projection), and Rising on the Planes. These three techniques can be described as seeing, traveling, and rising.⁵¹

In 1892, two Golden Dawn adepts, Florence Farr and Elaine Simpson, coauthored a side lecture labeled “Flying Roll Number 4,” which was titled “An Example of the Mode of Attaining to Spirit Vision and What was seen by Two Adepts.” They briefly described their method and personal experience of a skrying vision as follows:

Secure for an hour or longer absolute freedom from interruption. Then alone, or with one or two other Adepts, enter the vault, or a private chamber. Remain in silence and contemplation for several minutes.

Rise, and perform the Qabalistic Cross and prayer. Then proceed to contemplation of some object, say a Tarot Trump: either by placing it before you and gazing at it, until you seem to see into it; or by placing it against your forehead or elsewhere, and then keeping the eyes closed; in this case you should have given previous study to the card, as to its symbolism, coloring, analogies, etc.

In either case, you should then deeply sink into the abstract ideal of the card; being in entire indifference to your surroundings. . . . Consider all the symbolism of the Tarot Card, then all that is implied by its letters, number, and situation, and the paths connected therewith.

51. For more information on the theses three procedures, see Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, 455–478. Also see our edition of Regardie's *A Garden of Pomegranates: Skrying on the Tree of Life*, chapter 9, 193–215.

The vision may begin by the concentration passing into a state of reverie; or with a distinct sense of change, something allied in sensation to a faint, with a feeling urging you to resist, but if you are highly inspired, fear not, do not resist, let yourself go; and then the vision may pass over you.⁵²

In the document Farr and Simpson go on to describe what they perceived in a skrying into the tarot card of The Empress.

As an important realm of the greater macrocosm, the astral plane is also the inner world of the human soul—an inner dimension. Through skrying, the magician gazes into this invisible world for esoteric knowledge. By using astral projection, the magician enters this world and interacts with angels, elementals, and other beings. When magicians interact with angels and spirits on the astral plane, what they are actually doing is working with those parts or archetypes that exist as a part of the magician's own psychic makeup. This reflects the Hermetic axiom "As above, so below." These archetypal spirits and beings exist within the mind of the magician, just as they exist on a larger scale within the mind of the divine creator of the universe. To interact with one is to interact with the other.

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How to Make and Use a Magic Mirror: Psychic Windows into New Worlds by Donald Tyson (Blaine, Wash.: Phoenix Publishing, Inc. 1996).

Projection of the Astral Body by Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1970).

52. See Francis King's *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic and Alchemy*, 71.

Enochian Magic

Any discussion of the system of magic known as Enochian must necessarily begin with the legend and mythos of the Enochian or Angelic language and move forward with the facts of the Enochian system as they are known to have been first developed during the Elizabethan era.

The Legend of Enoch

The story of the prophet Enoch first appears in the Hebrew Scriptures in the book of Genesis 5:18–24. Enoch, the seventh patriarch, was said to have “walked with God” for three hundred years before “God took him.” In the New Testament we find reference to Enoch in the Book of Hebrews 11:5, which tells us that the prophet was “translated” (i.e., transformed) so that he did not die, but was carried directly up to heaven. The name Enoch (or more properly Henoch) is variously said to mean “retainer”; “follower”; “teacher”; or “dedicated.”

The bulk of the legends surrounding Enoch are to be found in three apocryphal books that chronicle the life and exploits of the prophet. These include Enoch I (also called the Book of Enoch and the Ethiopic Enoch), which dates to the second century B.C.E.,⁵³ Enoch II (also known as the Secrets of Enoch and the Slavonian Enoch),⁵⁴ and Enoch III (also called the Hebrew Enoch).⁵⁵

53. *Enoch I* was discovered in Abyssinia in 1773 by James Bruce. It was translated from an Ethiopic copy of a Greek manuscript in 1821 by Richard Laurence, Archbishop of Cashel. [See Richard Laurence, *The Book of Enoch the Prophet* (San Diego, Calif.: Wizards Bookshelf, 1983.)] The original was probably written in Aramaic. Once thought to be post-Christian, recent discoveries of copies of this text among the Dead Sea Scrolls prove that the book predated the Christian era. There is a mountain of evidence to suggest that the early Christians approved of this book. The New Testament contains over a hundred phrases that find precedents in the Book of Enoch.

54. A copy of *Enoch II*, written in the Slavonic language, was discovered in 1886 in the Belgrade public library by Professor Sokolov. It was probably copied from a Greek version of a Hebrew or Aramaic original. Composed in Egypt, this text dates to the beginning of the Christian era. There is no doubt that the authors of the New Testament were heavily influenced by it. It was translated by Morfill and Charles in 1896. See Rutherford H. Platt, *The Forgotten Books of Eden* (New York: Bell Publishing Co., 1980), 81–105.

These chronicles of Enoch describe the prophet's celestial journey through the ten heavens, replete with every manner of spiritual entities: hosts of angels and archangels, watchers, grigori, phoenixes, chalkydri, and other fantastic creatures. Upon reaching the highest heaven, Enoch meets the Lord God, who commands his angels to show the prophet a number of holy books containing all the knowledge of heaven and earth. Acting as a faithful scribe, Enoch records the content of the divine library in 366 books for the instruction of humanity. Consequently the secrets of the heavenly realms and the predetermined course of human events were unveiled to him. The Hebrew Book of Enoch suggests that once he ascended whole into heaven, the prophet was transformed into the archangel Metatron, "the great scribe" and king over all the angels.⁵⁶

So great was the reverence for Enoch that magicians and occultists have identified him with the Egyptian god Thoth, Hermes of the Greeks, and Cadmus of the Phoenicians—all inventors of alphabets.⁵⁷

The Enochian System of John Dee

The true origin of the Enochian system is to be found in the ceremonial skryings of Englishmen Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelly toward the end of the sixteenth century. Dr. Dee (1527–1608) was one of the foremost thinkers of his time—a Hermetic philosopher, alchemist, and magician who was also a respected scientist, mathematician, and astronomer. After teaching and lecturing on the continent for a couple of years, Dee returned to England in 1551, where he spent the next thirty years teaching oceanic navigation to sea captains who wished to explore the new world. He also spent a considerable amount of time studying the occult sciences. Dee was imprisoned for practicing magic and casting horoscopes in 1555, but was released after a few months. After the death of the

55. Enoch III was translated by Hugo Odeburg in 1922 and published in 1928. This text is a version of the Hekhaloth literature.

56. See Karel Van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. Van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans/Brill, 1999), 303.

57. Lewis Spence, *An Encyclopedia of Occultism* (New York: Citadel Press, 1996), 148.

Catholic queen Mary I in 1558, religious tolerance gained a foothold in England, allowing magicians and scientists the freedom to operate. Eventually Dee attracted the attention of the young Queen Elizabeth I, and he was asked to cast a horoscope to find the most favorable date for her coronation (January 15, 1559). Although Dee was pursued by many foreign dignitaries, he chose to remain in the devoted service of his queen, who consulted him regularly on astrological and other mystical matters.

Around 1570, Dee moved to Mortlake, where he assembled a collection of almost three thousand printed books and one thousand manuscripts. His personal library rivaled that of any in England at the time. Dee's house had plenty of space for books and all of his scientific and laboratory apparatus.

In addition to his magical exploits, Dee's contribution to the fields of geography, navigation, philosophy, mechanics, optics, mathematics, medicine, cryptography, theology, and astronomy cannot be overestimated. He was a true renaissance man—mystically inclined and brilliant in all the intellectual studies of his day.

It was at Mortlake that Dee's interest in angelic magic began in earnest. Dee's technique involved skrying with crystals and mirrors in combination with the some of the methods described in Agrippa's *de Occulta Philosophia*.⁵⁸ One drawback to Dee's work was that he himself was not a skilled seer. To remedy this, he employed a number of skryers in order to communicate with angels, taking upon himself the duty of scribe and recorder.

In 1582, Dee met with one Edward Talbot, who later took the name of Edward Kelly. Kelly proved to be a most excellent seer for Dee's purpose, and the two began a rigorous, almost daily routine of skrying over the course of seven years, resulting in volumes of angelic communications that were scrupulously recorded in Dee's journals. Their method of communicating with the angels was complex, and every aspect of it, including the construction of the proper furniture and various magical items, was

58. See Robert Turner, *Elizabethan Magic* (Great Britain: Element Books, 1989), 19.

dictated by the angels themselves. The magicians were instructed to make a magical table, the *Tabula Sancta* (the Holy Table or Table of Practice), the *Sigillum Dei Aemeth* (the "Seal of Truth," a nine-inch wax pentacle etched with complex designs), seven additional talismans, a magical ring, a magic mirror, and a new shewstone or crystal.

Armed with these devices, the two magicians set to work: Kelly would sit at the Table of Practice, upon which were placed magical seals and wax pentacles. He would stare intently into the skrying crystal. Dee sat at another table, holding a chart divided into forty-nine by forty-nine squares, each containing a letter. As Kelly began to skry, he recounted seeing an angel who held a similar chart in one hand and a wand in the other. The angel would communicate to Kelly by pointing with the wand to a letter on the chart. Kelly would relay the column and row of the letter so that Dee could find it on his own chart. Using this technique, a series of angelic messages was arrived at, one letter at a time. In addition, the message was dictated backwards because the angels indicated that the words themselves contained such a powerful force that it was ill-advised to dictate them in the correct manner. Over the next seven years the angels would communicate a vast amount of material to Dee and Kelly—material that would contain the complexity of the Enochian system in a few distinct subsystems or different aspects of Dee's system of angel magic. The most important of these are briefly listed below.

One of the earliest of these subsystems to emerge was *de Heptarchia Mystica* ("The Mysteries of the Sevenfold Kingdom" or literally "Concerning the Mystic Sevenfold Dominion"),⁵⁹ a system of Enochian planetary magic containing the names, sigils, and invocations of angels connected to the seven Ptolemaic planets. The *Heptarchia* includes a circular diagram called the *Tabula Angelorum Bonorum* 49—"The Table of the 49 Good Angels."

On March 26, 1582, the angels transmitted a series of twenty-one hieroglyphic characters—the letters of an entire language with its own

59. See Robert Turner, *The Heptarchia Mystica of John Dee* (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: The Aquarian Press, 1986), 75.

unique alphabet and syntax. This was the Angelic or Enochian language. Each letter was given a name and correlated to its Latin equivalent.⁶⁰

From March 29 to April 6, 1583, the angels dictated the first portion of *Liber Logaeth* (also called *The Book of Enoch*, *Liber Myseriorum Sextus et Sanctus* or *The Book of the Speech of God*).⁶¹ *Liber Logeath* contains several folios including a number of invocations and a large number of double-sided tables of forty-nine by forty-nine squares containing letters and numbers. *Liber Logeath* was completed on May 6, 1583, in accordance with a timetable commanded by the angels.

The Round Tablet of Nalvage: On April 10, 1584, contact was made with an angel named Nalvage, who communicated the creation of a tablet that was used for allocating the proper functions of various angelic hierarchies.

From April 13 to July 13, 1584, the angels dictated three more Enochian subsystems that were more or less connected with each other. These were *48 Claves Angelicae*, *Liber Scientiae Auxilii et Victoriae Terrestris*, and *A Book of Supplications and Invocations*.

Using *Liber Logeath* in a manner that has since been lost to us, Dee and Kelly generated *48 Claves Angelicae* ("The Book of the Forty-Eight Angelic Keys"). This was a series of "Keys," "Calls," or invocations given in the Enochian tongue and translated into English. Many of these invocations are comparable in style to the passages of the Book of Revelation.⁶²

60. This is not the same as the Enochian alphabet cited in various Masonic Encyclopedias. See Albert G. Mackey and Charles T. McClenahan, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1924), Vol. One, 246.

61. See Turner, *Elizabethan Magic*, 22.

62. According to the later teachings of the Golden Dawn, there were nineteen Keys, but only eighteen that could be audibly expressed. (There is an archetypal Key that relates to the purity of the Godhead. Like the Fool card of the Tarot, it is numbered 0.) The first discernible Key is attributed to the Tablet of Union as the whole, the second Key to the governance of Spirit in the Tablet of Union. The next four Keys are assigned to the angels of four Watchtower Tablets as a whole. The next twelve Keys are attributed to the various quarters of each Tablet. Next are the Keys assigned to the thirty Aethyrs or "Aires," which were various Enochian spirit realms. Only one Key was provided for these thirty realms—the name of the specific Aethyr used in the Call is the only variance.

Liber Scientiae Auxilii et Victoriae Terrestris ("The Book of Knowledge, Help, and Earthly Victory"): This book contains an intricate system of magic based on a grid of letters called the Great Table of the Watchtowers, which consisted of the Four Watchtowers of the East, West, North, and South.⁶³ Joined together in the Great Table, the Watchtowers were connected by a central cross of squares called the Black Cross.⁶⁴ *Liber Scientiae Auxilii et Victoriae Terrestris* also contains a volume of material associated with the names of ninety-one "Governors" who rule over the thirty Aethyrs or "Aires," which were various Enochian spirit realms. It includes instruction on how the sigils of these names may be constructed. This book is connected with 48 *Claves Angelicae* through the final "Call of the Aethyrs."

*The Book of Supplications and Invocations*⁶⁵ provides extensive information on the angelic hierarchies connected with the four Watchtowers, including invocations to summon them.

Dee and Kelly journeyed together on the continent, where they continued to practice their angelic communications. They were welcomed in their travels by royal dabblers in the occult arts. After roaming around Europe for six years, Dee returned to England in 1589. Kelly stayed in Prague to carry on his alchemical experiments, but was imprisoned and later died. After the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, Dee lost his royal patronage. Impoverished, Dee died in 1608 at his home in Mortlake at the age of 76.

Golden Dawn Enochian Magic

Approximately three hundred years later, the Enochian system of John Dee and Edward Kelly was incorporated into the inner teachings of the Esoteric Order of the Golden Dawn. It was not until S. L. MacGregor Mathers integrated it into the Golden Dawn curriculum that the Enochian scheme of

63. These were later to become the four Elemental or Watchtower tablets of the Golden Dawn.

64. The Golden Dawn later employed the letters of the Black Cross to form the Tablet of Union, attributed to the Quintessence or crowning element of Spirit.

65. See endnote 24, page 29, of Turner, *Elizabethan Magic*.

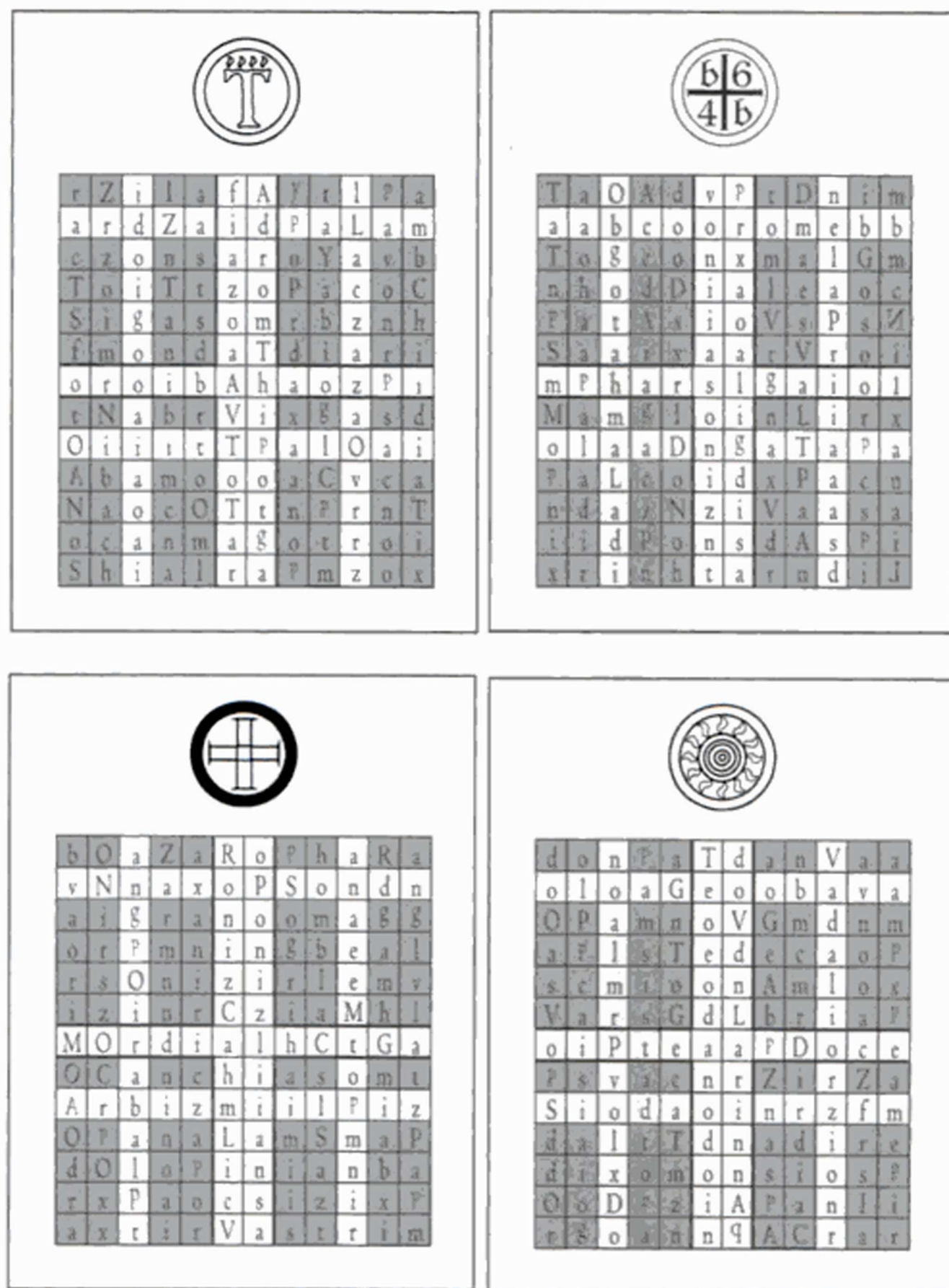


Figure 24: Elemental tablets of the Golden Dawn; from upper left, clockwise, air, water, earth, and fire

magic became a truly effective and potent system. Although Dee and Kelly recorded the system given to them by the angels, they did little or no practical work with the system once they had received it:

Although the sophistication of these later communicated systems is apparent, it is strange to note that the only real practical example of Dee's employment of any of the transmitted techniques stems from his usage of earlier and unrefined *Heptarchia Mystica*. . . . It was this Table [*Tabula Angelorum Bonorum* 49] that provided the basis for the only recorded example of talismanic magic to be drawn from the Angelic Actions. Furthermore, it seems that the characters of the Angelic Alphabet were employed here for the first time with any definite purpose.⁶⁶

Of course we may never know the full extent of the system as utilized by Dee, since at one point an unthinking maid used half of his manuscripts to drain pies and kindle fires. In any event the Enochian system did not reach anywhere near its full potential until it was adapted by the Golden Dawn.

The thing that distinguishes Enochian Magic as taught by the Golden Dawn is that it makes possible an astonishingly effective and powerful synthesis of both theoretical and practical occult philosophy. In the hands of Dee and Kelly the Enochian material remained a useless mass of letters and squares; and if Kelly feared it and Dee revered it, the salient fact is that neither of them ever accomplished anything with it. But in the hands of MacGregor Mathers and his colleagues the Enochian system stood revealed as a true concourse of all the forces in the microcosm Sephirotic, elemental, planetary and astral. It fused Kabbalah, tarot, astrology, and geomancy into a unified psychological field. Its map of the planes is the most comprehensive, and at the same time the most practical, that I have ever encountered. In short, the method works: it unlocks the secret doors of the mind as no other published system has ever done. . . . At the same time, I do not wish to suggest that the Enochian system as organized by the Golden Dawn founders is complete and perfect beyond all possibility of improvement.⁶⁷

66. Ibid., 25.

67. Thomas Head, "An Introduction to the Enochian Teaching and Praxis," published in *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic* by Israel Regardie (Phoenix, Ariz.: Falcon Press, 1984), Vol. X, no. 2.

The Enochian system has been a part of the Golden Dawn curriculum since the bare-bones outlines of the initiation rituals were first set down in the folios of the Cipher Manuscript. Divine Enochian names, as well as the Watchtower Tablets from which they were taken (see figure 24), are introduced to the student in the grades from Zelator through Portal. However, the Enochian system is not studied by the student until he or she enters the Second Order and becomes an Adeptus Minor.

It is true that the Enochian system as developed by the Golden Dawn differs in many respects from the initial system first unveiled by John Dee. Some authors have suggested that the older Dee system is “purer” than that of the Golden Dawn. Others have insinuated that Dee’s Enochian system was designed to bring about the Apocalypse described in the Book of Revelation. Perhaps it is out of fear of the system that some groups initially founded on the teachings of the Golden Dawn have decided to scrap the Enochian system altogether.

If the founders of the Golden Dawn ever thought that apocalyptic magic was the real purpose of the Enochian system, then they certainly would never have included it in the Order’s curriculum—the Adepts would have never considered practicing it or teaching it to others. Likewise, modern-day Golden Dawn magicians do not subscribe to the apocalyptic Enochian theory.

That being said, the Enochian system of magic is very potent. Enochian angels and archangels are often said to be less tolerant of mistakes than their Hebrew counterparts. They do not suffer fools lightly, and it is sometimes said of Enochian angels that “they bite.” They are not to be invoked lightly on a whim or for stupid reasons.

The Enochian system, like any system revealed through skrying, is necessarily filtered through the psyche of the skryer. The clarity of the skryed vision depends on the psychic “transparency” of the seer as well as on the receptivity of the magician. In Dee’s diaries there are some instances where the Enochian angels, speaking through Kelly, were reprimanded by Dee for suggesting ideas that sound very Gnostic to modern ears, such as the concept of reincarnation—something many of today’s readers find quite acceptable. Yet Dee was unwilling to listen to things that offended

his faith. He was more interested in asking the angels about world politics and foreign affairs. It should come as little surprise, then, that the angels communicated things that did not offend him, such as Enochian invocations that sound very similar to apocalyptic passages from the Book of Revelation, something Dee would have approved of.

It is our opinion that the real purpose of the Enochian system is to provide a potent venue for theurgical practices. This is certainly the purpose for which it is employed in the Golden Dawn.

In this vein, it is important to stress that the Golden Dawn's Enochian system, like all other aspects of the Order, is a living tradition, subject to growth, experimentation, interpretation, and change. The Golden Dawn's knowledge of Enochian is not limited to what MacGregor Mathers compiled a century ago, or the Enochian documents included in the Zelator Adeptus Minor curriculum as printed in Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*. From published sources such as Regardie, some authors have wrongly assumed that Golden Dawn magicians only work with the Watchtower Tablets and the Enochian Calls—they presuppose that other aspects of Dee's system, such as *de Heptarchia Mystica*, *Tabula Sancta*, the skrying crystal, the Golden Talisman, etc., have no place in the Golden Dawn system of magic. This is incorrect. Perhaps one of the greatest tributes to the Enochian system is the position of high respect afforded to it by the Golden Dawn—it is considered to be the apex and crowning jewel of the entire system. This is precisely why Enochian is not taught until all other aspects of the Golden Dawn curriculum have been thoroughly assimilated by the student.

At the outset, let it be said that a good deal of systematic study will be required to appreciate the value and subtle significance of this system. It is one of the most amazing magical schemes that I have ever encountered, since it provides a thorough-going and comprehensive synthesis of the entire magical system of the Golden Dawn . . . Therefore, because it is a synthetic amalgamation of all the Order, the student will find it necessary and imperative to have made himself thoroughly familiar with all the other items of knowledge taught by the Golden Dawn. He must know his Tarot and Geomantic attributions so well that the names, symbols, and ideas are all at his fingertips—

this, naturally, in addition to the basic knowledge items of the Hebrew alphabet, Tree of Life, and the Qabalah generally. The formulae of practical Magic derived from the Z-documents, dealing with the symbolism of the Candidate, the Temple, and the Ceremony of the Neophyte Grade will require to be not only memorized and known, but understood. The student will need to be perfectly acquainted with the Pentagram and Hexagram Rituals, the formulae of the Consecration Ceremonies, the general art of invocation, and formulating Telesmatic images, and drawing Sigils.⁶⁸

Enochian is the unifying system of magic that underlies much of the practical work of the Adept. Different aspects of the Enochian system are studied in every grade and subgrade of the Second Order.

Several Second Order rituals contain Enochian material in varying degrees. The Adeptus Minor studies the Enochian alphabet, learns to perform divinations through Enochian Chess, invokes Enochian entities and angels in ritual magic, and skrys into the various Enochian squares that are associated with the Watchtower Tablets. The bulk of the published Enochian material contained in the curriculum of Zelator Adeptus Minor can be found in Regardie's *The Golden Dawn* (Book Nine, pages 623–696).⁶⁹

FURTHER READING

John Dee: The World of an Elizabethan Magus by Peter French (New York: Ark Paperbacks, 1972).

The Enochian Magick of Dr. John Dee by Geoffrey James (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994).

The Heptarchia Mystica of John Dee, edited by Robert Turner (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: The Aquarian Press, 1986).

68. Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 624–625.

69. Other published sources include Regardie's *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*, Vol. Ten, 1–160. Also see Pat Zalewski's *Golden Dawn Enochian Magic* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), and "Book H: Clavicula Tabularum Enochi" by W. Wynn Westcott, published in Carroll Runyon's *The Seventh Ray: Book I: The Blue Ray* (Silverado, Calif.: C.H.S. Publications, 1999).

Golden Dawn Enochian Magic by Pat Zalewski (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994).

Enochian Chess of the Golden Dawn by Chris Zalewski (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994).

CHAPTER SEVEN



The Work of a Golden Dawn Magician

The previous pages have provided a very brief outline of the historical influences, prominent members, principles, and teachings of the Golden Dawn. The reader who has just begun to assimilate this information may be contemplating further involvement with the Golden Dawn system of magic. If so, the following questions will prove to be relevant: Should I seek the path of Golden Dawn initiation? Is self-initiation possible? Is lineage important? What does it mean to follow a magical discipline? What does it mean to be an initiate of the Western Esoteric Tradition?

The Purpose of Initiation

It is well known that like attracts like, and that sooner or later we tend to drift into the society of our fellows. Especially is this true of those who have contacted the Divine; the great mental currents which play through the cosmos, just as the invisible magnetic currents play around the earth, bear him to his appropriate place. This is why the esoteric science never goes out to seek its pupils.¹

Initiation symbolizes a new beginning. It is the beginning of a new stage of life; the passage into a distinctly new type of existence. Initiation represents

1. Dion Fortune, *The Training and Work of an Initiate* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 2000), 30.

spiritual growth; the dawning of a new life dedicated to an entirely new group of principles from those of mundane or materialistic society. The earmarks of this spiritual "new birth" are indicated by an expansion of the mind to include a realization of higher levels of consciousness.

The rite of initiation is meant to purify the candidate and prepare him or her to receive the secrets and teachings of the group. It is a process of symbolism and ceremony that results in the direct stimulation of the will and the rapture of the imagination. What this is designed to bring about is the purification of the lower personality (the "me first" part of the psyche) and the establishment of an exalted level of consciousness, so that the magician's ego is gradually cleansed and enabled to unite over time with his or her own Higher and Divine Genius. Every aspect of a Golden Dawn initiation ceremony—every speech, action, and symbol—is designed to affect the candidate's aura with specific magical energies required on the Path of Light. "For the assault on the Holy City, every sense and every faculty is deliberately mobilized, and the whole individual soul of the operator must enter into the act."²

Initiation ceremonies have always played a major role in esoteric groups, from the mystery religions of the Hellenistic era to the Hermetic organizations of today. Spiritual seekers of ancient times were drawn to the rites of Isis and Osiris, Eleusis, Samothrace, and Orpheus because of the sense of spiritual vigor and euphoria they provided through elaborate initiation ceremonies. To be an initiate means that one is accepted into an inner circle whose teachings and rituals are meaningful only to other members of the group who share this common experience. This is just as true today as it was in antiquity. Admittance to such a group confers a sense of fellowship and belonging, of receiving arcane information, and of having been uplifted through the disclosure of divinely inspired wisdom. Therefore, it is absolutely pointless to become an initiate simply to glorify the ego or lord knowledge over someone else—such behavior renders the entire initiatory process null and void. A candidate seeking acceptance into an Order must first prove him- or

2. Israel Regardie, *The Tree of Life: An Illustrated Study of Magic* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 2001), 150.

herself worthy of trust, and capable of assuming the responsibilities required in a magical discipline.

There are two forms of initiation: astral and physical. The astral initiation takes place on the ethereal planes, and is not always recognized by the individual until a certain amount of time has passed (although sometimes it is immediately comprehended). This type of initiation is not obtained through other human beings—it is granted to a person directly by the spiritual archetypes within the psyche.

The other type of initiation is a physical ceremony carried out by an initiating team in a physical temple. Some may assume that the astral initiation is the only form that is valid—the physical one being only a staged drama. This is simply not true. A physical induction reaffirms the candidate's spiritual will by the deliberate act of submitting him- or herself to the process of the initiation ceremony. A physical initiation grounds the energies of the astral initiation, whether it is a group ritual or a rite of self-initiation. It is a visible declaration to the universe of the magician's desire to follow the path of the sacred mysteries.

The Question of Group Lineage

Today's fraternal organizations and magical groups have had a long tradition of tracing their hereditary roots and initiatory rites back to the esoteric societies and archaic religions of earlier times—to the sixteenth century Rosicrucians, the medieval Knights Templar, the ancient Israelites, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and even the inhabitants of Atlantis, lost in the mists of time. While these various legends of ancient initiatory lineages and even "apostolic succession" can provide inspiration, allegorical information, and symbolic knowledge that is of great value to the initiate, they almost always break down under the scrutiny of historical fact. Even Freemasonry, the oldest fraternal organization in the world, maintains a legendary or mythological link to the ancient builders of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem although, in historical fact, the beginnings of Grand Lodge Freemasonry can be dated no earlier than 1717.³

3. See chapter 2, footnote 11.

The “myth of origin” for any esoteric group should be valued for nuggets of wisdom, ethical teachings, symbolic meanings, and the values it tries to inculcate within the group. Such legends are romantic and appealing to the magical imagination, but they should never be understood to be historically accurate.

The same is true of the Golden Dawn. There is no “line of apostolic succession” that leads directly from Christian Rosencreutz to MacGregor Mathers. Wynn Westcott’s German Rosicrucian Adept, Fraulein Sprengel, was a necessary invention but a fiction nonetheless. Since the Esoteric Order of the Golden Dawn ceased to exist in 1903, splitting apart into three separate splinter groups, no one in this day and age can possibly claim institutional lineage to the original Order—much less back to the mythological character of Christian Rosencreutz.⁴

More often than not, questions concerning the lineage of a magical group can interfere with a student’s spiritual growth a great deal if they get caught up in the glamor of obtaining a magical merit badge from a so-called “legitimate” organization, rather than focusing on the goal of personal spiritual growth. Empty gestures, lofty titles, and hollow proclamations of high degrees mean little or nothing to one’s own Higher Self.

There is also the question of just how desirable lineage really would be if it magically linked the student to a group or leader who may have the proper pedigree on paper, but whose words and actions run completely opposite to the ideals, principles, and ethics that the original organization was founded on. (For a hypothetical example, what if the infamous Madame Horos and her husband Theo had been granted a legitimate charter by MacGregor Mathers to run an A. O. temple of their own?

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4. The fact that many groups still attempt to do so is a sad commentary on the spiritual insecurity and immaturity on the part of the groups’ leaders. According to private correspondence and public letters from R. A. Gilbert, many individuals and groups still try to claim such institutional lineage, charters, and other impossibilities—however, they usually refrain from letting qualified Golden Dawn historians, such as Gilbert, examine such documents for authenticity. (Initiatory lineage, which is recognized by Masonic law, is not the same thing as institutional lineage.)
 5. Excerpt from a letter dated 1916, from George Winslow Plummer to Edward Brown.

Would lineage to this abusive couple have been considered advantageous to Golden Dawn seekers? Obviously not.) It is altogether too easy for such groups to end up as an empty shell or, worse, with no spiritual "center" at their core. "If the fountainhead is not pure, we cannot expect the stream to be any purer."⁵

In the age of the Internet it is even easier for half-truths and outright deceptions about lineage to be propagated. Few venues for gauging the accuracy of the content of esoteric websites are available—and reviews placed on the websites themselves can hardly be considered unbiased. Unfortunately, the advent of Internet newsgroups and online forums has proven to be a double-edged sword, bringing a bounty of information to those who have no other access to such information, but also bringing out the lowest, most base aspects of human nature in the form of flame-wars, turf-wars, and mud-slinging. This problem is not unique to ceremonial magicians, however, it is an unfortunate byproduct of the ego-mania that sometimes plagues Western magicians who have not properly attended to the true spiritual and psychological work of theirurgy. This is also a problem that tends to turn off huge numbers of sincere seekers. When faced with Internet forums and newsgroups that appear to be little more than avenues for posting venom and gossip, the sincere seeker should ask him- or herself the following questions: How much weight can be given to a post written by someone who hides their true identity under a fake screen name?⁶ Is someone who constantly posts

6. Some individuals vent their frustration with the world by attacking others through the anonymity of the computer monitor and fake screen names. It is their way of attracting desperately wanted attention to themselves without personally having to take responsibility for their own words and actions. These needy individuals often use multiple screen names with separate personalities to create the illusion that a single poster is a multitude who all share the same opinion. These various "posters" then assail their intended target with numerous attacks, creating the deception that "everybody" opposes the target, so the target must be at fault. By using this type of deception, the attacker constantly pushes his propaganda at the public, in the hope that the public will believe it.

Another trick used by the unprincipled poster is to attack his target using multiple screen names, then use his real name and pretend to take the moral high-ground and "defend" the target.

hateful diatribes against other people and/or groups really a spiritual person? Is there something the poster hopes to gain by attacking other people and/or groups, such as money, power, ego gratification, or influence over others? Aren't there more productive things to do?

The sincere seeker would do well to remember the following piece of advice from the grimoire *The Key of Solomon the King* to those who seek to practice the high magical arts:

[I]t is absolutely necessary to ordain and to prescribe care and observation, to abstain from all things unlawful, and from every kind of impiety, impurity, wickedness, or immodesty, as well of body as of soul; as, for example, eating and drinking superabundantly, and all sorts of vain words, buffooneries, slanders, calumnies, and other useless discourse; but instead to do good deeds, speak honestly, keep a strict decency in all things, never lose sight of modesty in walking, in conversation, in eating and drinking, and in all things.⁷

Self-Initiation

Self-initiation has become a subject of debate in recent years, usually for reasons that have nothing to do with the Great Work and everything to do with a few groups soliciting for new members to increase the size of their pocketbooks. Many of the founders of the world's great religions taught that true spirituality is a personal process of self-analysis, self-sacrifice, and self-growth. A number of the most influential teachers of the Western Esoteric Tradition also believed that self-initiation was not only possible, it was in reality the only true initiation.

All spiritual development comes from within the individual, arising from discipline and self-improvement. No man can increase the spirituality of another. To attempt to do so is to disregard one of the most fundamental laws of nature—the law of Karma. Man earns wisdom by right thought and right action. The legitimate schools of the ancient wisdom, and the legitimate teachers of the doctrine offer spirituality to no one. They merely indicate a path of action, which, if fol-

7. S. L. MacGregor Mathers, *The Key of Solomon the King* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1974), Book II, Ch. 4, 88.

lowed with consecration and intelligence over a long period of years, will result in certain improvement of character and knowledge.⁸

Another source tells us:

We cannot remind our readers too often that the Great Initiator comes in the Silence to the higher consciousness, and is never a human being, however supernatural and secluded. All that can be done by the Servants of the Masters on the physical plane is the preparation of the candidate.⁹

This same sentiment is expressed to candidates in no uncertain terms at their reception into the Neophyte grade:

Remember that God alone is our Light and the Bestower of Perfect Wisdom, and that no mortal power can do more than bring you to the Pathway of that Wisdom . . .¹⁰

Israel Regardie strongly believed in the idea that a student could initiate him- or herself through the various levels of spiritual growth. It was his opinion that by repeated performance of such rituals as the Opening by Watchtower¹¹ and the Middle Pillar Exercise, the aspiring magician could effectively be considered an initiate of the Golden Dawn current. But it was also his opinion that success in this endeavor hinged on the student's own fortitude and determination. Responsibility for spiritual progress, its success or failure, was up to the individual.

In stating that the isolated student could now be his own initiator, one important phrase is rendered imperative. And that is he must be

8. Manly P. Hall, *Words to the Wise: A Practical Guide to the Esoteric Sciences* (Los Angeles, Calif.: The Philosophical Research Society, Inc., 1963), 30.

9. Fortune, *The Training and Work of an Initiate*, 52.

10. Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn* (6th ed., St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), 130.

11. A ritual created by Regardie. It is based on the Golden Dawn's Supreme Invoking Ritual of the Pentagram and the Ceremony of the Consecration of the Vault of the Adepti. See our book *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1995), 692-696.

persistent and as thoroughgoing and exacting as if he were an initiator in a regularly constituted Golden Dawn temple under the constant scrutiny of officialdom and higher adept authorities.¹²

Most of the Golden Dawn's curriculum, from Neophyte through Zelandor Adeptus Minor, has been published and is readily available for any interested student who is dedicated enough to pursue the studies on their own. One does not need to be a member of any acknowledged organization or temple to do the Great Work.

Self-initiation is indeed possible, but it should never be assumed that it is an easy path nor one that can be undertaken lightly. The solitary Golden Dawn magician must have the fortitude to scale the Tree of Life by pulling up on one's own bootstraps, so to speak. The disadvantage for the solo magician is that there are no temple-mates to offer advice if problems arise, and the student will have to depend on books or correspondence with other magicians for clarification of magical matters. The advantage of working solo is that the student need not fear being exploited by a corrupt magical group or teacher who exists to only to coerce followers into providing money, sex, labor, obedience, work, and flattery—unfortunately all-too-common abuses in this era of profiteering gurus who view esoteric teachings merely as a meal ticket or an outlet for ego gratification.

Mixed Tradition Groups

It should be noted that throughout this book our primary focus has been on traditional Golden Dawn—that is, the primarily Osirian¹³ emphasis of the Outer Order, and the primarily Rosicrucian emphasis of the Inner Order. However many groups today are adding other elements or mixing different traditions with Golden Dawn teachings. There is nothing inherently wrong with this, so long as these groups make these distinctions clear to prospective members.

12. Israel Regardie, *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Falcon Press, 1984), Vol. One, 9.

13. Osiris, the Egyptian god of resurrection and rebirth.

Some spiritual seekers may be attracted to traditional Golden Dawn teachings, while others would favor a mixture of Golden Dawn with Thelema, Wicca, etc. It is up to the student to choose which type of group they prefer. Students should not expect a mixed tradition group to suddenly take up traditional Golden Dawn work. Likewise, students who join a traditional Golden Dawn group should not expect to find other spiritual traditions added in.

The Safeguards of the Golden Dawn System

As we have discussed in chapter 4, the traditional Golden Dawn system as conceived by Westcott and Mathers was founded on an absolutely crucial design of gradual spiritual training. One of the hallmarks of the Golden Dawn system is that little in the way of practical magic is actually taught to students of the Outer Order. This is not simply due to the fact that the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn is a school where students must first commit the rudiments of occult knowledge to memory before beginning practical magical work. The primary reason for this by far is so that the student's psyche is not overwhelmed by the spiritual forces being awakened in it by the alchemical process of initiation—a delicate process which, if botched, can result in the all-too-common scourge of ego inflation and infantile megalomania. Unfortunately a good percentage of magicians persist in disrespecting the Golden Dawn's time-honored initiatory process and in ignoring the essential safeguards built into the system by its very founders.

This is what makes the Golden Dawn's Outer Order curriculum of study and initiatory process so important. The conscious commitment to learn the symbolic, magical alphabet of the unconscious mind before delving into the deeper waters of the astral plane results in the cultivation of psychic reflexes that aid the magician and make all ceremonial work flow more smoothly and safely. But more importantly, the memorization of magical data changes the very structure of the psyche, which is gradually infiltrated by holy symbols that speak on a subconscious level to the Divine Being in each of us. The mind of the magician is steadily purified by this process as an increasing percentage of mundane thoughts and impulses are supplanted or transformed by spiritual thoughts.

If advanced magical procedures such as evocation are introduced to the initiate during this delicate process of inner purification and psychic rebalancing, the results can sometimes be disastrous. This is not just a requirement of the Golden Dawn; most of the medieval grimoires, such as the *Book of Abramelin the Mage*, insist that the magician be absolutely pure in heart, body, and mind before attempting to contact and command the inhabitants of the spirit world—lest he be torn apart on the rocky shores of the lower astral. The Abramelin system outlined a strict and arduous discipline for achieving the necessary purity, including long, exhaustive periods of prayer, abstinence, fasting, confession of sins, and more. In the medieval world, purity of the mind, body, and soul was considered an absolute prerequisite for magical work. Cornelius Agrippa, whose work greatly influenced the Golden Dawn, seemed to understand the psychological implications of “purity” and how achieving such purity is crucial prior to performing magical operations:

Therefore it is meet that we who endeavor to attain to so great a height should especially meditate of two things: first, how we should leave carnal affections, frail sense, and material passions; secondly, by what way and means we may ascend to an intellect pure and conjoined with the powers of the gods.¹⁴

Whosoever therefore being desirous to come to the supreme state of the soul, goeth to receive oracles, must go to them being chastly and devoutly disposed, being pure and clean go to them, so that his soul be polluted with no filthiness, and free from all guilt. He must also so purify his mind and body as much as he may from all diseases, and passions, and all irrational conditions, which adhere to it as rust to iron, by rightly composing and disposing those things which belong to the tranquility of the mind; for by this means he shall receive the truer and more efficacious oracles.¹⁵

14. Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, edited and annotated by Donald Tyson (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1993), Book III, Ch. 3, 448.

15. *Ibid.*, Book III, Ch. 53, 638.

And finally:

Now we receive this influence (of divine virtue) then only, when we do acquit ourselves from burdensome impediments, and from carnal and terrene occupations, and from all external agitation; neither can a blear or impure eye behold things too light, neither can he receive divine things who is ignorant of the purifying of his mind. Now we must come to this purity of mind by degrees; neither can anyone that is initiated newly into those mysteries presently comprehend all clear things, but his mind must be accustomed by degrees, until the intellect becomes more enlightened, and applying itself to the divine light, be mixed with it.¹⁶

In the Golden Dawn system of magic, the alchemical and psychological process of purification is of paramount importance to the grades of the Outer Order. Those who adopt complex Second Order magical procedures into the First Order curriculum are no longer following the traditional teachings of the Golden Dawn in the manner in which they were intended to work.

The First Order of the Golden Dawn was and is a solid foundation where the student gathers the tools, building materials, and information necessary to: (1) receive an influx of Divine Light, (2) establish an alignment on the Tree of Life and correspondingly imprint the Tree within the psyche, (3) stabilize the unbalanced portions of the psyche through elemental equilibration, and (4) create the groundwork and solid substructure necessary for more advanced magical work in the Adept grades.

The work of the soul must take precedence over any desire to speed up the process. Divine Light cannot be poured into broken vessels—and we are all broken vessels until we decide to take the steps necessary for our own restoration. It is for this reason that the First Order student should refrain from performing the more advanced magical operations of the Second Order. Such techniques have a very powerful effect on the psyche, and combined with the effect of elemental fragmentation caused by the Outer Order grades, they can put additional stress on the student's etheric body.

16. *Ibid.*, 638–639.

An Outer Order student who is still undergoing the alchemical process of fragmentation, and has not yet begun the process of spiritual reintegration, will have a hard time gaining the respect of the highest, most divine angels or commanding the spirits. (In this case, the spirits may be the ones doing the commanding!)

When we consider that the human psyche is a highly complex mechanism—the conscious and unconscious halves of the mind functioning together as the center of thought, emotion, and behavior—it should be apparent that the psyche has great implications for human happiness as well as human misery. It has the potential to secure the highest spiritual awareness or succumb to the most base of selfish impulses—illumination or madness—or any number of steps in between. This is why careful and gradual training of the psyche in the magical arts is the correct path to take, and why compelling the psyche to undertake magical practices for which it has not been adequately prepared can sometimes be tantamount to disaster. Would-be occultists and magicians who fail to take magical safeguards seriously sometimes wind up with magnified psychological complexes.

Herpetologists preparing to handle deadly snakes sometimes inject themselves with antivenin (produced from snake venom). Through repeated injections of antivenin, or small doses of snake venom, they gradually raise their immunity to the poison, thus making handling these lethal serpents safer. In the same manner, the Golden Dawn magician learns the practice of magic and undergoes the alchemical processes of initiation in gradual steps. Thus, when faced with his or her own personal demons in the form of the seven-headed serpent of the Qliphoth, the magician will have been wisely inoculated against its poison. Only then will the magician be prepared to face other, possibly bigger dragons. Pity the magician who rushes off to evoke Goetic spirits without having even a rudimentary understanding of the Hebrew alphabet—armed only with bravado, an attitude of entitlement, and ignorance of his or her own inner psychic workings!

A physician must study long and hard before ever being allowed to perform complicated surgeries. Should we expect any less of ceremonial magicians whose arena is the human psyche—the most powerful magical tool ever devised?

The Problem of Ego

When the Golden Dawn's initiatory process of alchemical separation, dissolving of psychological impurities, and recombination is not allowed to run its course to completion—when students seek to rush through the grades without attending to the work of the soul—then the process is never completed and no true reintegration occurs. The result is often an overinflated ego and messianic complexes, as well as countless magicians claiming to be the reincarnation of Crowley or Mathers. Combating the problem of ego inflation is one of the most important aspects of magical work, and the initiate is well advised to remain ever vigilant for signs of it. This is not just a Golden Dawn problem—egomania runs rampant among magical traditions of all stripes. There are a couple of reasons for this. One of them is the reemergence of infantile megalomania caused by the stimulating effects of magic.

All human beings experience infantile megalomania when, as young children, we believe that the world revolves around us. As we grow into adulthood this overinflated concept of self-importance gradually dissolves and the healthy adult ego emerges.

The practice of magic works to release latent energy from the subconscious and expand the mind's horizon. As the magician becomes proficient in the magical arts through invocation, skrying, and ritual work, he or she experiences an increase in psychic awareness, knowledge, self-confidence, and feelings of new life-purpose and direction. But magic can also sometimes reawaken the mechanism of the infantile mega-ego, causing delusions of grandeur and self-importance. Thus:

This flattery overwhelms the ego. The person takes the impersonal and universal powers he or she experiences as if he or she created the powers or experiences by what they call—themselves. . . . This excessive self-admiration leads to an overinflated ego which in the end leads directly to disaster and contradicts in toto the purpose of the great Work.¹⁷

17. Regardie, *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*, Vol. One, 18.

The ego problem often develops gradually and without warning in those afflicted by it. It can develop in magicians who are working within the guidance of a temple or on their own, although it is often easier to spot when a group of magicians are working together. In this respect, there are more safeguards in a temple setting, where the ego-inflated magician may be advised by his Hierophant to take corrective measures—or he may be soundly told off by his temple-mates, who see him starting down the path of megalomania. Unfortunately, there are also instances where the Hierophant may be the one who has fallen into the ego trap, such as when:

... the guru has himself fallen under the spell of his own messianic fantasies and inflation. If he has, then he communicates his fatal sickness to his students. Or else he is wholly blinded to the debacle about to occur to his student.¹⁸

Concern over ego inflation led Israel Regardie to insist that any serious magical student seek out some form of psychotherapy to guard against it.

One of the most critical junctures at which a Golden Dawn student must not show or experience any signs of the ego problem is when he or she prepares for admission into the Second Order. It is vitally important to have completed the alchemical process of the Outer Order grades prior to this. The reason: In the initiatory system of the Order, the sphere of Tiphareth is the seat of the Higher Self—the Holy Guardian Angel who mediates between the Divine Self in Kether and the Lower Self in Yesod. But it is also the seat of the ego in the Qabalistic divisions of the soul. So if any remnant of the ego problem remains when the initiate's sphere of sensation is elevated to Tiphareth it will be magnified, and the magician may confuse the infantile ego-consciousness with the concept of the Higher Self, mistaking the one for the other:

Instead of being guided by a Higher Genius the person is really at the mercy of the infantile "voices" and values, so-called brain chatter. Not only does this cause undue individual sufferings and deception, it also

18. *Ibid.*, 20.

causes a complete halt to any real progress in the Theurgic arts and sciences.¹⁹

The wrong choice at this crucial point could put an end to further progress in the Great Work. Choose wisely.

Following a Magical Discipline

In today's fast-moving world, new religions and magical groups come into existence at an astounding rate. Some individuals change their spiritual path on what seems like a monthly basis. It is common and understandable that many people become disenchanted with the orthodox faith of their parents and seek spiritual fulfillment elsewhere. However, many people make the mistake of choosing a spiritual path based on what can only be called a certain "comfort level"—they seek out a spiritual path that is nonthreatening, sentimental, easy-going, and low maintenance. Ironically, these same easygoing paths can sometimes lead to a sense of boredom, stagnation, and dissatisfaction, because very often they do not include the idea of discipline. If a spiritual path is too easy, the individual is not challenged to progress or improve oneself.

Too often, people go looking for a magical path for reasons of self-centeredness rather than self-improvement. Instead of gaining fame, riches, or power over other people, they soon learn just how difficult it is to gain mastery over one's self.

Most students do not appear to realize exactly what is meant by the term Adept . . . nor why a severe discipline and training embracing every branch of man's nature should be so absolutely necessary.²⁰

A discipline is described as a routine of training and self-control that is expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior, especially training that results in moral, ethical, or mental improvement. The entry into a magical discipline is a primary step in the life and evolution

19. Ibid., 17.

20. Regardie, *My Rosicrucian Adventure* (1936), reprinted as *What You Should Know About the Golden Dawn* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Falcon Press, 1987), 99.

of a magician. It represents a binding dedication to a deeply magical/mystical life, for the initiate will be called on to put aside the lower desires of the ego and assume a profound obligation to actively undertake the Great Work of spiritual development and transformation. Although such training is undertaken by the individual, it is fully expected that the resulting psychic balance and self-improvement will also be beneficial to one's family, friends, circle of associates, and humanity as a whole.

Dedication to a spiritual discipline such as the Golden Dawn involves a number of prerequisites for the magician's character. These include integrity, discrimination, patience, diligence, moderation, responsibility, self-sacrifice, and service to others.

Integrity

Integrity implies steadfast adherence to a strict ethical code. "Integrity is the irresistible inward impulse to do that which is wise, noble, and beautiful."²¹ A magician who claims to hold spiritual principles in high regard, and yet acts in direct opposition to those principles, will never earn the trust of his fellow initiates nor attain the completion of the Great Work.

Unfortunately some people who join magical groups or fraternal Orders feign the appearance of integrity. They mouth the words of a required oath or obligation to get what they want out of a group, without ever considering the possibility of standing behind the words and values they have sworn to uphold.

Take the following for a hypothetical example: a fraternal Jewish organization that will only admit candidates who are devout Jews. It would be wrong for a practicing Buddhist, Christian, or Neopagan to join the organization and swear an oath that they are, in fact, a Jew. Such candidates may think they can justify such action to themselves on the grounds that "I believe all world's religions contain the same nuggets of truth, therefore I can say that, in a sense, I am Jewish." This type of thinking might not seem unreasonable or dishonest, yet it creates an excuse for dismantling and disregarding a key element of the hypothetical Jewish fraternity's basic principles.

21. Hall, 52.

When the words spoken in an oath mean nothing, when they are parroted merely to join a group without respect to that organization's fundamental principles, then their true intent has been twisted out of context, parsed into meaninglessness, or contorted to pass through contrived loopholes.

The same is true for an initiate of the Golden Dawn who has sworn never to perform acts of black magic under any circumstance. In the Neophyte Oath, the candidate swears: "I will not debase my mystical knowledge in the labor of Evil Magic at any time tried or under any temptation."²² In the Portal initiation, the candidate swears "to use whatever practical knowledge (I) may now, or at any future time possess, for a good end alone . . ."²³ In the Adeptus Minor ceremony, the initiate again swears "not to debase my knowledge of Practical Magic to purposes of evil and self-seeking. . . and if I do this, notwithstanding this my oath, I invoke the Avenging Angel HUA, that the evil and material may react on me."²⁴ It is difficult to imagine how anyone could mistake the meaning and intent of such an important pledge.

Discrimination

Discrimination entails having good judgment and clarity of vision. It is the ability to discover truth when truth is not self-evident; to choose wisely between confusing options or conflicting opinions. The ability to discriminate means having the shrewdness and discernment to make the right choice when difficult choices have to be weighed and acted on. It can also involve the ability to detect falsehood masquerading as truth, or illusion posturing as reality. Discrimination is invaluable to the quest for spiritual wisdom:

[D]iscrimination picks unerringly the polar star from a galaxy of constellations. In modern metaphysics, thousands of students drift from cult to cult upon a tide of moods and emotions. We cannot truly

22. Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 123.

23. *Ibid.*, 203.

24. *Ibid.*, 230.

progress until we chart the course of our purposes. Discrimination removes the uncertainties from action. We drift no longer, but steering a sure course, come at last to the safe haven we have sought.²⁵

Choice, Responsibility, and Self-Sacrifice

Too often in today's society, we assume that we "can have it all." In our materialistic world we have plenty of choices, but few people want to choose one thing over another. Nobody wants to have to choose between chocolate cheesecake and a slender waistline, between tax cuts and municipal services. The choice between having time or money is a pervasive one in our society, for few people have the luxury of both. Ironically, making a choice is sometimes seen as bad, because it limits choices. If you had no choice, you wouldn't have to choose and take responsibility for what is chosen. Thus, the ideas of choice and responsibility go hand in hand. It is only natural for human beings to want to have it all—it is a basic desire of the lower ego.

Everyone retains the infantile craving to want to have everything; however, one of the basic lessons of adulthood is that when we make choices to have some things, there are other things we cannot have. If you buy a car you might not have the money to buy a computer, even though you may still want one. If you get married, you are no longer free to date different people, even if you are still attracted to them. If you become a Muslim imam, you can no longer be admitted to the Catholic theological seminary, even though you may rightly believe that you could learn much at the seminary that would benefit your spiritual path. These are all choices that have to be made. When you choose one thing over another, you must take the responsibility that comes with that choice, and you must often sacrifice something else that may also be desirable. This idea is common to many spiritual traditions—in order to show true dedication to one's spiritual commitment, you must sacrifice something that is also of value to you. Sacrificing something that you don't care about is no sacrifice at all, and it proves nothing.

25. Hall, 53–54.

Dedication to the path of a Golden Dawn magician requires personal sacrifice. Much time and effort must be given over to the required studies and exercises. When a magician fasts as part of a spiritual discipline, he or she sacrifices the pleasure of eating a meal. By taking an oath to keep something secret, the magician sacrifices the pleasure of telling it to someone else.

If a Golden Dawn student is also a member of twenty other magical and esoteric groups, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to commit to the requirements of all, and the student's personal studies may suffer as a result of being spread too thin. The magician may have to choose what interests are the most important to them and sacrifice other interests.

Those who expect worldly or social gain for themselves through this Order will be disappointed, yet none of us who have made sacrifices for it in a right spirit are disappointed with the result.²⁶

The more the student gains in esoteric knowledge and psychic skills, the more he or she is expected to work for the benefit of themselves and humanity as a whole. This is not so much a requirement of the Order as it is a basic cosmic law. The universal equivalent of "you get out of it what you put into it" is part and parcel of the Great Work. And this calls for sacrifice—sacrifice of time, money, emotion, energy, etc. This is one reason why all the great mystery schools have employed the image of the sacrificed god, the dying and resurrected deity, to symbolize the work of spiritual transformation and growth.

Self-sacrifice is required on the part of the lower ego. To the average person, sacrificing a part of the ego may seem foolish, but the submission of the lower personality to the Higher Self can result in the attainment of something that is far more satisfying and lasting than temporary wants and desires. It results in the illumination of the human soul by the inner, Divine Light—the true spiritual gold of the alchemists.

26. "Flying Roll No. XVIII" by Annie Horniman, published in Francis King's *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic, and Alchemy: By S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Others* (Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books, 1987), 113.

Service

During the last couple of decades, we have seen an enormous amount of value placed on the self (specifically the lesser self, the individual self, not the Divine Self). From concern over the “self-esteem” of our children to the “self-realization” of ourselves and our peers, we have become a self-absorbed society. Glorification of the personal ego is at an all-time high.

We certainly need our ego to function in daily life. Having an ego not only gives us a point of reference for interaction between ourselves and others, it also gives us motivation for self-preservation in the face of danger. However, inflation of the ego is a perennial problem among Western magicians. The more skilled in magic the student becomes, the more he is threatened by inflation of the ego. Israel Regardie strongly suggested that the magician seek out a form of good psychotherapy to prevent inflation of the ego and channel its energy into more constructive pursuits.

One of these pursuits should be service to others, something that is fully expected of an Adept of the Western Esoteric Tradition. This involves seeing beyond immediate goals and self-gratification. It involves more than studying magic because “I want to be happy.” One of the great ironies of the human condition that was recognized over two millennia ago by Aristotle is that one cannot find happiness by striving for it as a goal—that happiness is a side effect of having a good character and a life well-lived. The “good life” is not just focused on things that give pleasure, but also on doing what is right and fulfilling one’s responsibilities to others.

In a Fraternity, the training of character is especially stressed, and the great lessons of brotherhood and selfless service have to be learned.²⁷

A magician striving to complete the Great Work is not simply working to improve his or her own lot, but also to benefit humanity as a whole. Since all human beings are linked in the “great chain of consciousness,” one magician working to attain personal growth can advance the evolution of all humanity through a type of spiritual osmosis. But more than that, as we climb the branches of the Tree of Life, it is expected that we

27. Dion Fortune, *The Esoteric Orders and Their Work* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 2000), 84.

reach down to lend a helping hand to those who follow us on the Path. In doing so, the magician should not anticipate praise or reward; often, neither will be forthcoming. The true reward comes from being a spiritual healer in the true Rosicrucian fashion and on focusing on "a life well-lived."

Patience and Persistence

The work of the First Order of the Golden Dawn is to prepare the initiate for the work of high ritual magic—by building a firm and solid foundation of magical knowledge. How is this done? By the gradual and steady attainment of esoteric knowledge; through the balancing of the archetypal elements within the psyche; and by performance of the required meditations and other gradework. This is not a course of action that can be rushed through. The process of training a person in the work of the Outer Order can be compared, on one level, to the process of training a person for an important profession. The Golden Dawn is a school of Hermetic knowledge that works to refine students and make them into balanced, ethical magicians as well as better human beings.

We must stress that students not get caught up in trying to advance through the grades in the shortest amount of time possible. Spiritual growth is not a competition or a race. The various grades are intended as periods of time wherein the elemental composition of the initiate's psyche are explored and equilibrated. Some initiates are able to equilibrate these psychic components more quickly than others. The act of rushing through the grades too rapidly not only defeats the purpose of balance, it can sometimes prove harmful in the long run. Intellectual proficiency in the gradework is not enough to justify advancement to a higher grade. It is important that students work to balance out the previous initiation before moving on to the next one.

Patience, diligence, and endurance are necessities on the magical path. Many authors have given readers the misleading impression that illumination can come suddenly after only a few days or weeks of spiritual exercise or after a specific initiation ritual. In a true spiritual discipline this is not the case. Like Darwinian evolution, the Great Work is not accomplished

overnight. It requires a long-term commitment. Sometimes, the work of an initiate will feel like ecstasy, while at other times it will seem like drudgery. In spirituality nothing of value can be accomplished without patience. Rather than expecting the “one, powerful, earth-shattering moment of Absolute Illumination,” initiates should expect a series of gradual mystical insights and moments of psychic clarity—not earth-shaking events, but very valuable nonetheless. The Divine Union comes in small increments and gradual stages, like the careful and painstaking process of alchemy. Over time these flashes of insight will add up and constitute real and lasting psychic growth.

A True Initiate

Although this book specifically deals with students and initiates of the Golden Dawn tradition, the values we have tried to inculcate are those common to all initiates of the Western Esoteric Tradition.

A true initiate is one who is humble—they do not boast about their wonderful magical exploits, their superiority, or their lofty accomplishments as a magus of great power. Magical braggarts display their own imbalance, egotism, and immaturity. The initiate recognizes his or her own faults, and understands that real magic does not result in the creation of an “Exalted Master” with superhuman powers. True Adepthood brings about a conscious awareness of, and communion with, the Divine Light. It also produces a sincere desire to help bring one’s fellows to the beauty of that Eternal Light.

An initiate is one who strives for psychic balance and who tries to cultivate, as much as possible, his or her own latent abilities in order to reach one’s highest spiritual potential. An initiate understands the necessity for purification and consecration for the sake of higher and divine principles. It is one who is willing to commit themselves to a spiritual discipline and work hard at it. An initiate is a theurgist—a spiritual alchemist who is the subject of their own alchemical experiment, eliminating the dross and sublimating the essence. It is one who understands that the Path of the Magic of Light is not a quick or easy road. An initiate dedicates his or her whole life to pursuit of the Philosopher’s Stone, True Wisdom, Perfect Happiness, and the Highest Good.

The result, which the Magician above all else desires to accomplish, is a spiritual reconstruction of his own conscious universe and incidentally that of all mankind, the greatest of all conceivable changes. The technique of Magic is one by which the soul flies, straight as an arrow impelled from a taut bow, to serenity, to a profound and impenetrable repose.

But it is only man himself who may tauten the string of the bow; none else may accomplish this task for him. It is of course in this qualifying clause that lurks the flaw. "Salvation" must be self-induced and self-devised. The universal essences and cosmic centers are ever-present, but towards them man must take the first step and then, as Zoroaster has said in the Chaldean Oracles, "the blessed immortals are swift to come." The cause and maker of fate and destiny is man himself. As he acts so must the course of his future existence be. Not only so, but in the hollow of his palm rests the fate of all mankind. Not a large number of individuals will feel equal to awakening the dormant courage and the grim determination which masters the universe, that thus by a road direct and free of obstacle mankind may be led to a nobler ideal and a fuller and more harmonious mode of life. Were only a few men to exert themselves to discover what they really are, and ascertain beyond all cavil the scintillating refulgence of bright glory and wisdom burning in the innermost heart, and discover the bonds connecting them with the universe, then I think they will have accomplished not only their own individual purpose in life and fulfilled their own destiny, but, what is infinitely more important, they will have fulfilled the destiny of the universe considered as one vast living organism of consciousness.²⁸

Does Hermeticism feel like your spiritual path? Are you drawn to the teachings of the Golden Dawn tradition? Within the pages of the book you've just read, we have tried to provide some guidelines for answering these questions. We encourage interested students to seek out more information on these subjects, by reading the books of Israel Regardie or our own books on the Golden Dawn. Seek out books by Pat Zalewski, Darcy Kuntz, John Michael Greer, and R. A. Gilbert. If you seek to join a magical group, do your own research on the different groups that are out

28. Regardie, *The Tree of Life, An Illustrated Study in Magic*, 20.

there, and talk to people who have been involved with them. Ask questions. Draw your own conclusions. As a good friend of ours advises, "think for yourself and question authority." This has always proven to be good advice.

Remember that spiritual growth is not always easy. When we take an obligation to tread the path of the mysteries, the universe tends to give us what we need for personal evolution, and not always what we want for a moment's pleasure. This has to be understood at the outset. However, if pursued with determination and perseverance, the teachings of the Golden Dawn will deepen your understanding of yourself and of the divine universe in which you live. You will gain a clearer insight into the unseen forces that flow through and shape the material world. But most of all, you will have taken a substantial step, one of many such steps, on the road to true personal evolution—the completion of the Great Work.

APPENDIX I

Golden Dawn Timeline

	1887	Westcott decodes the Cipher Manuscript. He asks Mathers and Woodman to join him in setting up the new Order.
March 1	1888	Isis-Urania Temple No. 3 is chartered. Westcott, Woodman, and Mathers are the Three Chiefs. Mina Bergson (Moina Mathers) is the first initiate. (The numbering system marks the mythical Fraulein Sprengel's temple in Germany, Licht, Liebe und Leben as No. 1. Hermanoubis Temple No. 2, in London, was supposedly chartered but never active.)
	1888	Osiris Temple No. 4 at Weston-super-Mare is chartered. All members are Masons.
	1888	Horus Temple No. 5 at Bradford is chartered.
Fall	1891	The R. R. et A. C. is established.
December	1891	Dr. Woodman dies. No one is appointed to take his place.
Dec. 7	1891	Annie Horniman is the first initiate into the R. R. et A. C.
May 21	1892	The Matherses move to Paris.
March	1893	Westcott resigns as Praemonstrator. Florence Farr takes on the position. Annie Horniman is made Sub-Praemonstrator.
June 8	1893	Amen-Ra Temple No. 6 is chartered in Edinburgh. Members included J. W. Brodie-Innes and Dr. Felkin.
January 6	1894	Mather's Ahathoor Temple No. 7 is consecrated in Paris. Famous French occultist Papus (Dr. Gerard Encausse) is a member.
	1896	Florence Farr begins the "Sphere Group," a separate group of skryers within the Golden Dawn.

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Spring	1896	Annie Horniman and MacGregor Mathers have a falling out.
Oct. 29	1896	Mathers issues manifesto demanding written submission of Second Order members to his authority.
Dec. 3	1896	Annie Horniman is expelled from the Golden Dawn for insubordination.
Spring	1897	Westcott's association with the Order is made public. He resigns from office in the Golden Dawn and the R. R. et A. C. Florence Farr takes over his position as head of the Order in England.
	1897	Thmé Temple No. 8 is established in Chicago, Ill. Thoth-Hermes Temple No. 9 is established in New York.
Jan. 23	1900	Mathers initiates Aleister Crowley into the ⑤=⑥ grade in Paris after London Adepts refuse to initiate him. The London Adepts refuse to recognize Crowley's initiation.
January	1900	Florence Farr writes to Mathers. He accuses her of attempting to bring back Westcott as head of the Order. She resigns.
Feb.	1900	Mathers introduces Madame Horos as Fraulein Sprengel at Ahathoor.
Feb. 16	1900	Mathers refuses Ms. Farr's resignation. He accuses Westcott of forging the Sprengel letters.
March	1900	Second Order committee members in London investigate charges of fraud and expel MacGregor and Moina Mathers. Annie Horniman is reinstated.
April	1900	Schism. Mathers annuls Second Order committee and sends Aleister Crowley to take control of R. R. et A. C.'s property in London. The takeover fails.
	1900	Isis Temple No. 11 is created by Dr. Berridge in London. It remains loyal to Mathers. (This temple is also called Alpha et Omega 1.)
	1901	Internal battles over Florence Farr's "Sphere Group." Horos Trials and unwanted publicity.

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January	1902	Florence Farr resigns from the Golden Dawn.
June	1902	The Golden Dawn changes its name to the Hermetic Society of the Morgenröthe.
	1902	Horus Temple at Bradford gradually pulls away from G. D. teachings. Eventually turns from G. D. to S. R. I. A. ideals, and accepts only Master Masons.
July	1903	Schism. Brodie-Innes, Felkin, and the magically inclined members form the Stella Matutina. Their Mother temple is called Amoun.
November	1903	Waite, Blackden, Rev. Ayton, and the more mystically inclined members take over the remnants of Isis-Urania No. 3. Waite forms the Independent and Rectified Rite of the R. R. et A. C. (and the later Fellowship of the Rosy Cross in 1916).
late	1903	Temples loyal to Mathers take on the name Alpha et Omega.
	1912	Felkin establishes Smaragdum Thalasses Temple of the Stella Matutina in Havelock North, New Zealand.
	1912-1913	Alpha et Omega 2 (temple) is formed in Edinburgh as a daughter temple to Amen-Ra. Brodie-Innes is its chief, after having made peace with Mathers and broken off with Felkin.
	1913	Amen-Ra also sires a spin-off hybrid called Cromlech Temple or the Solar Order—a collaboration between Alpha et Omega 2 and Anglican clergymen. Brodie-Innes establishes an A. O. temple in London as a southern branch of his revived Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh. (It functions separately from Moina Mathers' Alpha et Omega 3.)
	1916	Felkin establishes the following temples of the Stella Matutina: Hermes Lodge in Bristol, The Secret College in London (open only to S. R. I. A. members), and Merlin Lodge in London. Felkin establishes another Order, the Guild of St. Raphael—a guild of the Anglican Church.

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- 1918 Paul Foster Case is initiated into the ①=① grade at Thoth-Hermes Temple No. 9 in New York (November).
- 1919 Moina Mathers returns to London after MacGregor's death and establishes the Alpha et Omega 3.
Dion Fortune joins Broddie-Innes' A. O. temple in London.
The A. O. establishes Ptah Temple No. 10 in Philadelphia.
- 1920 The Amoun Temple of the Stella Matutina in London is closed down due to the paranoid behavior of its chief (Mrs. Stoddart).
The A. O. establishes Atoum Temple No. 20 in Los Angeles.
- January 1922 Moina expels Paul Foster Case from the Golden Dawn. Case goes on to create his own Order, the Builders of the Adytum or B. O. T. A.
- 1922 Having left the Alpha et Omega, Dion Fortune forms the Fraternity of the Inner Light.
[Spinoff groups from the Fraternity of the Inner Light included The Guild of the Master Jesus (London, 1925), Helios (Gareth Knight—Toddington, 1956), the Enochian Temple (London, 1969), and the Servants of the Light (W. E. Butler).]
- 1923 The Stella Matutina is close to collapse. Yeats resigns.
- 1923 The Ahathoor Temple No. 7 possibly goes into abeyance.
- 1926 Israel Regardie was initiated into the S. R. I. A. (the American Order), which used Golden Dawn rituals.
- January 1933 Israel Regardie joins the Hermes Temple of the Stella Matutina in Bristol.
- November 1934 Regardie passes the Enochian Exam, the final test required in the subgrade of Z.A.M. (Zelator Adeptus Minor) and attains the subgrade of Th.A.M. (Theoricus Adeptus Minor).
- December 1934 Regardie resigns after becoming disillusioned with the Order's state of affairs.

- 1937 Regardie begins to publish the Order's teachings as *The Golden Dawn: An Account of the Teachings, Rites, and Ceremonies of the Order of the Golden Dawn*.
- 1939 Most temples of the A. O. and the Stella Matutina become dormant (with the exception of the Hermes Temple in Bristol, which worked sporadically until the early 1960s and finally closed completely in the early 1970s, and the Smaragdum Thalasses temple in New Zealand, which lasted into the late 1970s).
- 1960 The Hermes Temple goes into abeyance.
The Cromlech Temple goes into abeyance.
- 1972 The last British temple of the S. M., Hermes in Bristol, closes for good.
- 1977 A temple in the tradition of the Golden Dawn is set up in Columbus, Georgia. Work begins on the creation of the Vault of the Adepti.
- 1978 The last New Zealand temple, Smaragdum Thalasses, closes.
- 1982 Israel Regardie consecrates the Vault of the Adepti in Columbus, Georgia, and initiates two people into the ⑤=⑥ grade, reestablishing the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in America.
A couple in New Zealand (Pat and Chris Zalewski) found a Golden Dawn temple there.
- 2003 Now, more people than ever have access to Golden Dawn teachings. Numerous individuals now actively refer to themselves as practicing Golden Dawn magicians.

APPENDIX II

A Brief List of Magical Mottos

Ayton, Rev. W. A.:	<i>Virtute Orta Occident Rarius</i> —"Those that rise by virtue rarely fall"
Bennett, Allen:	<i>Yehi Aour</i> —"Let there be Light"
Berridge, Dr. E.:	<i>Resurgam</i> —"I shall rise again"
Blackwood, Algernon:	<i>Umbra Fugat Veritas</i> —"Truth puts darkness to flight"
Broddie-Innes, J. W.:	<i>Sup Spe</i> —"Under hope"
Bullock, Percy:	<i>Levavi Oculos</i> —"I will lift up mine eyes"
Case, Paul Foster:	<i>Perseverantia</i> —"Perseverance"
Cox, Benjamin:	<i>Crux Dat Salutem</i> —"The cross brings salvation"
Crowley, Aleister:	<i>Perdurabo</i> —"I will last through"
Dickson, W. E. Carnegie:	<i>Fortes Fortuna Juvat</i> —"Fortune assists the brave"
Farr, Florence:	<i>Sapientia Sapienti Dono Data</i> —"Wisdom is a gift given unto the wise"
Felkin, Dr. R. W.:	<i>Finem Respice</i> —"Have regard to the end"
Firth, Violet: (Dion Fortune)	<i>Deus Non Fortuna</i> —"By God not by chance"
Gardner, Frederick L.:	<i>De Profundis Ad Lucem</i> —"From the depths to the Light"
Gonne, Maud:	<i>Per Ignem Ad Lucem</i> —"Through the fire into the Light"
Horniman, Annie:	<i>Fortiter et Recte</i> —"Bravely and justly"
Horton, William:	<i>Spes Mea Christus</i> —"Christ is my hope"
Mathers, Moina:	<i>Vestigia Nulla Retrorsum</i> —"No traces behind"

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Mathers, Samuel L.:	'S <i>Rioghail Mo Dhream</i> —"Royal is my tribe" <i>Deo Duce Comite Ferro</i> —"With God as my leader and the sword as my companion"
Peck, William:	<i>Veritas et Lux</i> —"Truth and Light"
Pullen Burry, Dr. H.:	<i>Anima Pura Sit</i> —"Let the soul be pure"
Rand, Helen:	<i>Vigilate</i> —"Be watchful"
Regardie, Israel:	<i>Ad Majorem Adonai Gloriam</i> —"To the Greater Glory of Adonai"
Waite, A. E.:	<i>Sacramentum Regis</i> —"The sacrament of the king"
Westcott, Dr. W. W.:	<i>Sapere Aude</i> —"Dare to be wise" <i>Non Omnis Moriar</i> —"I shall not wholly die"
Wilde, Constance:	<i>Qui Patitur Vincit</i> —"Who endures conquers"
Woodman, Dr. W. R.:	<i>Magna Est Veritas Et Praelavebit</i> —"Great is the Truth and it shall prevail" <i>Vincit Omnia Veritas</i> —"Truth rules all"
Yeats, William Butler:	<i>Demon Est Deus Inversus</i> —"The devil is the reverse of God"

Glossary

Abramelin: The name of an Egyptian magician cited in *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, a magical text translated by S. L. Mathers. The French manuscript was written in the eighteenth century, but it purports to be a translation from an original text in Hebrew, dating from 1458. The grimoire contains elaborate instructions in the form of a six-month program of purification and prayer, designed to lead the magician to higher state of consciousness in which "knowledge and conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel" is possible.

A. O.: (See Alpha et Omega.)

Adam Kadmon: The "heavenly man" or body of God. The divine prototype of humanity, which is circumscribed on the Tree of Life. The crown of Kether is above his head and Malkuth is at his feet. Adam Kadmon includes within itself all of humanity, whose true home is in the spheres of the Tree, in which the celestial bodies are also located.

Adept: An initiate who has reached a certain level of attainment.

Adeptus Exemptus: The "exempt adept." The third grade of the Golden Dawn's Inner Order.

Adeptus Major: The "greater adept." The second grade of the Golden Dawn's Inner Order.

Adeptus Minor: The "lesser adept." The first grade of the Golden Dawn's Inner Order.

Adonai: Hebrew word meaning "Lord." Associated with the south in the LBRP.

Adonai ha-Aretz: Hebrew phrase for "lord of earth." Divine name associated with Malkuth. Intoned in the Middle Pillar Exercise.

Agla: Hebrew notariqon (acronym) for the phrase *Atah Gebur Le-Olahm Adonai* or "Thou art great forever, my Lord." Associated with the north in the LBRP.

Ain Soph: Hebrew phrase meaning "limitless." The middle veil of the three Negative Veils. The nearest term we can use to defining the ineffable Deity.

Ain Soph Aur: Hebrew phrase meaning "limitless light." The innermost of the three Negative Veils.

Akashic Library: (See Akashic Record.)

Akashic Record: Stored-up cosmic memory. A level of time-consciousness within the astral plane that contains all the past events, thoughts, images, and activities of humanity from the beginning of time. This "chronicle of the world" can be accessed by the mystic and the magician.

Alchemy: An ancient science of purification and transformation. There are two types of alchemy, which often overlap. Practical, laboratory, or outer alchemy is concerned with transforming a base material into a higher and more purified substance, such as the turning of lead into gold or the extraction of a medicinal substance from a plant in order to create a healing elixir. Spiritual, theoretical, or inner alchemy is concerned with the transformation of the human soul from a state of baseness to one of spiritual enlightenment.

Alchemical triangles: Also called the elemental triangles. A series of triangles used to represent the four elements: fire triangle, water triangle, air triangle, and earth triangle.

Alpha et Omega (A. O.): One of the three spin-off orders of the Golden Dawn after the collapse of the original order.

Amen: A notariqon or acronym for the Hebrew phrase *Adonai Melekh Na'amon*, meaning "Lord, faithful king." Its implied meaning is "so be it" or "so mote it be."

Angel: An entity within the divine hierarchy. A pure and high spirit of unmixed good in office and operation. Angels are anthropomorphic symbols of what we consider to be good or holy. Angels and archangels are considered specific aspects of God, each with a particular purpose and jurisdiction. They each have specific duties, such as bringing teachings, warnings, or messages from the Divine to human beings. The names of Qabalistic angels usually end in the suffixes "el" or "yah," which are divine names of God, indicating that the angels themselves are "of God." The word *angel* is derived from the Greek word *angelos*, meaning "messenger."

Anima: Latin word for "soul." In Jungian psychology it refers to the feminine soul image. The embodiment of the reflective feminine nature of man's subconscious.

Anima Mundi: Latin for "the Soul of the World." The divine essence that permeates all things.

Animus: In Jungian psychology it refers to the masculine soul image. The embodiment of the creative masculine nature of woman's subconscious.

Antimony: In alchemy a poison that in certain doses acts as a powerful medicinal remedy.

Apeiron: Greek for "boundless."

Archangel: A powerful angel who governs large groups or hosts of lesser angels. (See Angel.) According to some, archangels have free will, whereas angels do not.

Archetype: A prototype or original model after which other similar things are patterned. An ideal example of a type. A universal concept. Often referred to in Jungian psychology as a preexistent idea, mode of thought, or godform that manifests through the collective unconscious of humanity.

Archon: Greek for "ruler."

Aretz: Hebrew for "earth."

Ash: Hebrew for "fire."

Assiah: The "Material World." The final, fourth, and most dense of the four Qabalistic worlds or stages of manifestation. Assiah is the dense world of action and matter. It is attributed to Malkuth, the element of earth, and the Hebrew letter Heh (the final letter Heh, as opposed to the second letter Heh in the name Yod Heh Vah Heh). (See Four Qabalistic Worlds.)

Astral: From the Greek word *astrum*, or "star." That which belongs to the incorporeal level of being, which is beyond the material or physical.

Astral Light: An omnipresent and all-permeating fluid or medium of extremely subtle matter, this Light is diffused throughout all space, interpenetrating and pervading every visible form and object.

Astral Plane: An intermediate and invisible level of reality between the physical plane and the higher, more divine realms. It is the common boundary between the individual and noumenal reality. A nonphysical level of existence that is the basis of the physical plane.

Astrology: An ancient science that examines the action of celestial bodies on all living beings, nonliving objects, and earthly conditions, as well as their reactions to such influences. Whereas modern astronomy is considered an objective science of stellar distances, masses, and speeds, astrology is considered a subjective and intuitive science that not only deals with the astronomical delineation of horoscopes but is also looked on as a philosophy explaining the spiritual essence of life.

Atah: Hebrew for "Thou art." Associated with Kether in the LBRP.

Atziluth: The "World of Nobility." The highest and most abstract of the four Qabalistic worlds or stages of manifestation. Atziluth is the divine world of archetypes. It is attributed to Kether, the element of fire, and the Hebrew letter Yod. (See Four Qabalistic Worlds.)

Aura: A shell or layer of astral substance that surrounds and permeates the physical body. A halo or sheath of spiritual light/energy that surrounds a person and can be seen by clairvoyants. Also called the Sphere of Sensation.

Bahir: (See Sepher Bahir.)

Banishing Ritual: A ritual designed to get rid of unwanted mundane, astral, or spiritual energies. Banishings are intended to define a magic circle or sacred space on the astral. Banishings are usually a prelude to more complex rituals.

Banner of the East: In the Golden Dawn, the primary symbol of Light, held by the Hierophant.

Banner of the West: In the Golden Dawn, the primary symbol of Darkness, held by the Hieres.

Binah: Hebrew word for "understanding," referring to the third sephirah on the Tree of Life.

Body of Light: The astral body or etheric double. Often used to describe a ritually constructed vehicle for astral traveling.

Briah: The "World of Creation." The second of four Qabalistic worlds, consisting of Chokmah and Binah. Briah is the realm of archangels. It is attributed to the element of water and the Hebrew letter Heh. (See Four Qabalistic Worlds.)

C. R. C.: (See Rosenkreutz, Christian.)

Caduceus: The winged, serpent-entwined wand of Hermes. In the Golden Dawn, the caduceus wand is carried by the Keryx.

Calvary Cross: The Latin or Christian Cross.

Cancellaria: A female Cancellarius.

Cancellarius: Latin word meaning "chancellor" or "high official." Keeper of records. One of the Three Chief Officers in the Neophyte Hall.

Candidate: A prospective initiate.

Celtic Cross: A tarot spread or card layout made popular by A. E. Waite and taught in the First Order of the Golden Dawn.

Chaldean: A Greek synonym for "Babylonian." Similar to the name of the Assyrian Kaldû, which was part of Babylonia. In the Book of Daniel,

the word is used to indicate a class of wise men. The word *Chaldean* eventually came to mean an elite group of prophets, seers, astrologers, and alchemists.

Chaldean Oracles: Fragments from an oracular text brought to Rome by Julianus the magician in the second century C.E. These fragments, reputed to have been written by Zoroaster, are said to contain sacred doctrines and philosophies of the ancient Babylonian priests, which have come down to us through Greek translations. Paraphrased in Neoplatonic literature and philosophy, the Oracles form an important part of the literature of the Western Esoteric Tradition.

Chesed: Hebrew word for "mercy," referring to the fourth sephirah on the Tree of Life. Also called *Gedulah*, which means "greatness, magnificence, glory."

Chief Adept: The title of the primary officer in the R. R. et A. C.

Chokmah: Hebrew word for "wisdom," referring to the second Sephirah on the Tree of Life.

Christian Pantheism: The spiritual system espoused by Anna Kingsford. Christian pantheism examined the significance of biblical legends and symbolism. It incorporated the Qabalah as well as Egyptian, Greek, and Roman myths.

Cipher Manuscript: The manuscript that contains coded outlines of initiation ceremonies. Westcott used the Cipher Manuscript to flesh out the ritual of the Golden Dawn.

Circled Cross: (See *Rose Cross*.)

Circumambulation: To walk around in a circle, especially as part of a ritual or magical ceremony.

Clairvoyance: From the French *clairvoyant*, "clear-sighted." The ability of a seer, diviner, or skryer to see persons and events that are distant in time or place, using methods other than the normal mundane senses. Sometimes referred to as ESP or extrasensory perception. Clairvoyance may or may not include the use of objects such as crystals, magic

mirrors, or magical symbols as aids for enhancing one's abilities of perception.

Cohobation: In practical alchemy, a series of repeated distillations of a solvent over a substance. Recombination. Reunification.

Collective Unconscious: In Jungian psychology, those mental patterns and primordial images that are shared by all of humanity.

Consecrate: To make sacred. The ritual dedication of a person or object to a specific spiritual purpose.

Contemplation: Thoughtful and sustained observation of something as it is experienced.

Cosmos: From the Greek word *kosmos*, or "good order." It describes the universe as an ordered system, as opposed to a chaotic one.

Court Cards: The sixteen royal or "face" cards of the Minor Arcana. They include the King, Queen, Prince, and Princess.

Cups: One of the four tarot suits attributed to the element of water and the Qabalistic world of Briah.

Daath: Hebrew word for "knowledge." The so-called "Invisible Sephirah" on the Tree of Life, Daath is not really a Sephirah, but rather a conjunction of the energies of Chokmah and Binah. It can be likened to a passageway across the abyss.

Dadouche: A female Dadouchos.

Dadouchos: Greek word meaning "torch bearer." An officer in the Neophyte Hall who performs consecrations.

Dais: A raised platform in the east of the Neophyte Hall. The station of the Chief Officers of the Second Order.

Decan: (See Decanate.)

Decanate: A ten-degree section of a zodiacal sign. (Zodiacal signs are composed of thirty degrees.)

Demiourgos: Greek for "creator." A term coined by Plato and later adopted by the Gnostics to describe a lesser deity who reigns over the created universe. The demiurge is not the highest God, but only an instrument of the higher powers.

Demiurge: (See Demiourgos.)

Dissolution: Dissolving.

Divination: The art of uncovering the divine meaning behind chance events. In the Golden Dawn, it is used as a tool for psychic well-being and spiritual growth. There are various methods of divination, including cartomancy (reading tarot cards) and geomancy (earth divination).

Divine Name: A holy or magical name associated with a deity or an aspect of God that is vibrated or intoned during ritual.

Diviner: One who performs divinations.

Ego: That portion of the psyche that is conscious, most directly governs thought and behavior, and is most concerned with outer reality. Also called the conscious self.

Eheieh: Hebrew word meaning "I am." Divine name associated with Kether and intoned in the Middle Pillar Exercise.

Elemental Triangles: (See Alchemical Triangles.)

Element: In magic there are four basic elements (fire, water, air, and earth), which are regarded as realms, kingdoms, or divisions of nature. They are the basic modes of existence and action, and the building blocks of everything in the universe. The theory of the four elements was first espoused by Empedocles (fifth century B.C.E.) and later elaborated by Aristotle. A fifth element, Spirit, is said to bind together and govern the lesser four.

Eleusinian Mysteries: The most famous and secretive of the ancient mystery religions. The rites at Eleusis (near Athens) originated in the story of the goddess Demeter and her search for her daughter Persephone.

The Eleusinian Mysteries began with the journey of the *mystai* or initiates in a ceremonial procession from Athens to Eleusis to the Telesterion, or Hall of Initiation. The exact nature of the rites performed there remains unknown.

Emerald Tablet: One of the oldest of all alchemical texts, dating from the second to third centuries B.C.E. The *Tabula Smaragdina* or Emerald Tablet is said to have been written by Hermes Trismegistus. Source of the often-quoted phrase "As above, so below." (See Hermes Trismegistus.)

Enoch (or Henoch): "He who walked with God." Hebrew prophet said to be the seventh master of the world after Adam. (See Enochian.)

Enochian: A genuine language and a system of magic that was discovered by Dr. John Dee and his assistant, Edward Kelly. Beginning in 1582, the Elizabethan magician Dee and his seer, Kelly, continued to uncover the Enochian system over a period of seven years. The two men accumulated a great quantity of work, including an entire language with its own unique alphabet and syntax. This language, known as the "Secret Angelic Language," became known as Enochian because supposedly it was the angelic language revealed to Enoch by the angel Ave. (Enochian is pronounced *Eh-no-kee-an*, not *Eh-nah-kee-an*, because the prophet Enoch's name in Hebrew was spelled Heh, Nun, Vav, Kaph חֵנוֹךְ. The letter Vav is pronounced as a long "o," and when the name of Enoch was transliterated into Greek, the Vav was replaced by the letter omega, also pronounced as a long "o.")

The structure of the Enochian system was based on a cipher of numerological and set permutations of elements arranged on grids of letters known as the Watchtowers or Elemental Tablets and the Tablet of Union. From these tablets were derived the names of various elemental powers, angels, beings, and spiritual dominions known as aethyrs. Enochian magic is a complex system of elemental and spiritual hierarchies, which was further developed by the Golden Dawn.

Enochian Calls (or Keys): Invocations to the Enochian angels. The calls were revealed by the angels to Dee and Kelly through their skrying

work. The Golden Dawn made extensive use of the Enochian Calls in their magical work.

Enochian Chess: Also called Rosicrucian chess. A complex form of divination that used portions of the Enochian Watchtower Tablets. It was developed from older four-handed chess games including the Indian game of Chaturanga and the Persian game of Shatranji.

Enochian Pyramid: The astral form of an Enochian square, one of the lettered units on the grid of letters of a Watchtower Tablet. The astral form of the Enochian square is that of a truncated pyramid, each side of which has an elemental, astrological, planetary, tarot card, geomantic tetragram, or Hebrew letter correspondence.

Enochian Tablets (Elemental Tablets): Four charts stemming from the Enochian skryings of John Dee and Edward Kelly. They contain several rows of letters and are assigned to the four elements of fire, water, air, and earth. The names of numerous angels, archangels, and spiritual entities are derived from the letters on these charts. The Elemental Tablets play an important role in the Outer Order ceremonies of the Golden Dawn and are used in the higher magical workings of the Second Order. The four tablets are said to be bound together and ruled by the Tablet of Union.

Esoteric: Occult or secret. Inner. (See Exoteric.)

Etz ha-Chayim: Hebrew for the "Tree of Life."

Eucharist: The central sacrament of Christian worship in which bread and wine, representing the body and blood of Jesus Christ, are consecrated and consumed. Communion. In the Golden Dawn, a similar rite called the Mystic Repast or Feast of Osiris is performed, wherein initiates partake of the four elements, said to represent the reconstituted body of Osiris.

Evolution: The act of disentangling. Reducing complexity, gaining simplicity. In esoteric terms it is the ascent or liberation of spirit from the confines of matter. The "way of return," back to the divine. Symbolized

by climbing or ascending the Tree of Life. Progressive development of the mind and soul. (See Involution.)

Exoteric: Public, outward, outer.

Fama Fraternitatis: The first of three famous and mysterious Rosicrucian Manifestos, the *Fama* first appeared in the German town of Kassel in 1614 and stimulated interest in the Rosicrucian movement.

First Degree: The first of three degrees in the Golden Dawn system. Includes the five grades of the Outer Order, from Neophyte through Philosophus.

First Order: The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Also called the Outer Order.

Four Qabalistic Worlds: A fourfold division of the Tree of Life that separates the Tree into four levels of manifestation in accordance with the YHVH formula. The highest level is the most abstract and ethereal, while the lowest level is the most dense. They include Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah. (See YHVH.)

Fylfot Cross: An equilateral cross with arms bent at right angles. A symbol of whirling energy also called the swastika, Crux Gammata, Hammer of Thor, and Hermetic Cross.

Gabriel: Hebrew for "Strength of God." Hebrew archangel of elemental water, invoked in the LBRP and the SIRP. Also the name of the archangel of Yesod and the moon.

Geburah (or Gevurah): Hebrew word for "power." Often referred to as "severity," Geburah is the fifth sephirah on the Tree of Life.

Gedulah: Hebrew for "greatness, magnificence, glory." A title of Chesed.

Gematria: Part of the Literal Qabalah—the segment of Qabalah that interprets the codes found in Hebrew words contained in mystical texts. Gematria is a form of Hebrew numerology that uses the numerical values of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Names or words are converted into numbers in order to find hidden meanings. Words that

have the same numerical value are thought to have an important and significant relationship.

Genius: A ruling or protective spirit. The plural form is *genii*.

Geocentric: "Earth-centered." The ancient worldview that the planets revolved around the Earth as the center of the universe.

Geomancy: An ancient form of divination associated with the element of earth, which utilizes astrological correspondences.

Gnosis: Greek for "knowledge."

Gnosticism: A word derived from the Greek *gnostikos*, meaning one who has acquired gnosis or "knowledge" (literally, "one who knows.") Any of several Gnostic sects that flourished in the Mediterranean world during the time of Christ, particularly during the second and third centuries C.E. and for many centuries after. The two major branches of Gnosticism were Sethian or Jewish Gnosticism, and Valentinian or Christian Gnosticism.

Godform: An archetypal image of a god or goddess that is constructed by visualization on the astral plane. The outer expression of a deity. (See Godform Assumption.)

Godform Assumption: A magical technique wherein the adept works with the energies of a particular deity by assuming its form. The archetypal image of the deity is created on the astral by focused visualization, vibration of the deity's name, the tracing of its sigil, etc. The magician then steps into this astral image and wears it like a garment or mask, continuing to strengthen the image with focused concentration. This is performed in order to create a vehicle for that particular aspect of the divine that the magician is working with. The magician imitates but does not "channel" or identify him- or herself with the deity, although the adept may receive communication from the deity during this process. (Regardie often stated that the magician who identifies himself totally with a particular deity "is lost" and can become deluded by egotism.)

Great Work: A term borrowed from alchemy's magnum opus. It refers to the esoteric path of human spiritual evolution, growth, and illumination, which is the goal of theurgy. It indicates the spiritual seeker's quest for union with the divine.

Grimoire: From the French word for "grammar." A magical text. Any medieval book containing magical procedures or spells for summoning spirits. The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites Arthur Edward Waite as the first source of this usage of the word.

Hall: The room or temple space in which Outer Order ceremonies are performed.

Hegemon: Greek word meaning "guide." A main officer in the Neophyte Hall, who guides the candidate around the temple.

Hegemone: A female Hegemon.

"Hekas! Hekas! Este Bebeloi!": A magical phrase originally uttered at the Eleusinian Mysteries that means "Far, far away be the profane." In the Golden Dawn this phrase is used to indicate that a ritual is about to begin.

Hellenes: The Greeks.

Hellenistic: Pertaining to the postclassical period of Greek history and culture from the death of Alexander the Great to the accession of Augustus. Greek-like. Greek thought and customs.

Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus: "Hermes the Thrice-Great." The Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth merged into one figure, said to be the first and greatest magician. Hermes Trismegistus was reputed to be an ancient Egyptian priest and magician who was credited with writing forty-two books collectively known as the Hermetic literature. These books, including the *Emerald Tablet* and the *Divine Pyramander*, describe the creation of the universe, the soul of humanity, and the way to achieve spiritual rebirth.

Hermetic: Of or relating to Hermes Trismegistus or the works ascribed to him. Having to do with the occult sciences, especially alchemy,

astrology, and magic deriving from Western sources (Babylonian, Egyptian, Judeo-Christian, and Greco-Roman).

Hermeticism: A later manifestation of the Hermetic tradition that grew out of ancient Hermetism. The magic and mysticism of the Western world that is descended from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. It also includes Rosicrucian, Jewish, Arabic, and indigenous European spiritual traditions. The Western Esoteric Tradition.

Hermeticism: The Western Esoteric Tradition.

Hexagram: A geometric figure that has six points, formed from two interlocking triangles. The two triangles correspond to opposing forces of fire and water. The hexagram shows these rival energies balanced and in harmony with each other. Also called the Star of David and the Star of the Macrocosm. It is also a symbol of the perfected human being and signifies the Hermetic principle of "As above, so below." The penetration of one triangle by another is also said to represent the penetration of man's lower nature by the higher and divine forces. In the Golden Dawn, hexagram rituals are used to invoke or banish planetary or sephirotic forces.

Hiereia: A female Hiererus.

Hiererus: Greek word meaning "priest." A main officer in the Neophyte Hall who bars and threatens the candidate, preventing him or her from advancing further until the proper purifications and consecrations are performed.

Hierophant: Greek word meaning "initiating priest." The primary, initiating officer in the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn.

Hierophantissa: A female Hierophant.

Higher Self: A personification of the transcendent spiritual self that is said to reside in Tiphareth and mediate between the Divine Self and the lower personality. Sometimes referred to as the Holy Guardian Angel, the Lower Genius, and the Augoeides.

Hod: Hebrew word for "splendor," referring to the eighth sephirah on the Tree of Life.

Holy Guardian Angel: A term used by Abramelin to describe the Higher Self. A being attached to, or portion of each individual, that serves as a guardian or guide. (See Higher Self.)

Hypnotism: The inducement of a sleeplike state in which the individual being hypnotized may experience suppressed or forgotten memories, hallucinations, and increased suggestibility. The method of inducing a trancelike state in another person, during which time the judgment and will of the entranced person is subservient to the will of the hypnotist.

Immanent: Present. Existing within.

Imperator: Latin word meaning "leader, commander." The lawgiver. One of the three Chief Officers in the Neophyte Hall.

Imperatrix: A female Imperator.

Individuation: In Jungian psychology the process by which a person becomes self-realized or differentiated as a separate indivisible unity or "whole" that contains all aspects of the self.

Initiate: Implies a "new beginning." A person who has undergone initiation into a magical group. The act of initiating a new member into a magical or fraternal group.

Initiation: A ceremony, ritual, test, or period of instruction within which a new member is admitted to a fraternal or magical organization, or specific level of attainment.

Initiator: One who performs initiations.

Inner Order: The Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis (R. R. et A. C.). The Second Order in the Golden Dawn system.

Invocation: A ritual or portion of a ritual designed to establish inner communication with a higher spiritual entity. A potent prayer used to invoke a deity. (See Invoke.)

Invoke: To "call in" a spiritual entity. To call the power or presence of a higher spiritual entity into the psyche.

Involution: The act of enfolding or entangling. Gaining complexity. In esoteric terms it is the descent of spirit into matter. The "involving" of the Life Principle in matter. A form of divine sacrifice where spirit limits itself by being encased in matter. The formation of the spheres of the Tree of Life is an instance of involution. (See Evolution.)

Ipsissimus: In the Golden Dawn it refers to the hypothetical or honorary ⑩=① grade associated with the Sephirah of Kether.

Israel: In the Golden Dawn, a term used to indicate a state of order and balance.

Kabiri: Deities from the Samothracian Mysteries. They are referred to in the Practicus Ceremony. (See Samothracian Mysteries.)

Kerub: A single angel of the host known as the Kerubim.

Kerubim: Hebrew for "the Strong Ones." The group of angels assigned to Yesod.

Kerykissa: A female Keryx.

Keryx: Greek word meaning "herald." An officer in the Neophyte Hall, who leads circumambulations and gives announcements.

Kether: Hebrew word for "crown," referring to the first sephirah on the Tree of Life.

Khem: The ancient name of Egypt.

Kings of Edom: In the Golden Dawn, a term used to indicate the agents of disorder and chaos.

Knowledge and Conversation: Specifically, "Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel." A phrase adapted from Abramelin, picked up by Crowley and others.

Lamen: A magical symbol suspended from a collar and worn on the chest. A symbol of occult authority worn during rituals. A lamen is

usually a round plate, sometimes made of metal, which has magical symbols or words inscribed upon it. Modern lamens are often made from wood or cardboard.

LBRP: The Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram.

"Le-Olahm, Amen": Hebrew phrase meaning "the world forever, unto the ages." A phrase used in the Qabalistic Cross.

Left-Hand Pillar: (See Pillar of Severity.)

Lesser Banishing Pentagram: The form of the pentagram used in the LBRP.

Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP): A basic Golden Dawn ritual that uses the figure of the pentagram to cleanse the temple or ritual space of unwanted energies.

Lesser Invoking Pentagram: The form of the pentagram used in the LIRP.

Lesser Invoking Ritual of the Pentagram (LIRP): A basic Golden Dawn ritual that uses the figure of the pentagram to invoke elemental energies into the temple.

License to Depart: A ritual declaration that grants a spiritual entity permission to leave the temple or circle after the work of magic has been completed.

LIRP: The Lesser Invoking Ritual of the Pentagram.

Logos: A Greek term meaning "word." To the Gnostics, this was the term for deity manifest in the universe. The creative principle and underlying law of the universe. Creator of the visible world who existed before the creation of the universe. Life and light of the world and initiator of all life, movement, evolution, and rhythm.

Macrocosm (Also Macrocosmos): The "Greater Universe." (See Microcosm.)

Magic of Light: The practical magic of the Golden Dawn's Inner Order as classified under the five letters of the Pentagrammaton—YHShVH or Yesheshuah יהשכח. Evocations and invocations fall under the category of the Hebrew letter Yod י and the element of fire. Consecrations of talismans and the production of natural phenomena are classified under the second letter Heh ה and the element of water. All works of spiritual development and transformations are attributed to the letter Shin ש and the element of Spirit. All works of divination are assigned to the letter Vav ו and the element of air. All works of alchemy are classified under the final letter Heh ה and the element of earth. (See Pentagrammaton.)

Magical Mirror of the Universe: The human soul as a reflection of the divine.

Magical Motto: A special magical name or phrase chosen by the magician for use in a magical lodge. A magical name is taken in order to disassociate oneself from the mundane world for the duration of the magical work. Many magicians choose mottos that have personal spiritual significance for them. Golden Dawn mottos are typically rendered in Latin and Hebrew in order that they are outside the normal language used in secular life.

Magister Templi: "Master of the Temple." In the Golden Dawn it refers to the hypothetical or honorary ⑧=③ grade associated with the sephirah of Binah.

Magnum Opus: The "Great Work." Refers to the goal of alchemy.

Magus: A skilled or adept magician. Derived from the name *magi*, the Zoroastrian priest caste, and the Greek term *magos*, or "magician." Possible connection with the Greek *magas* or "great," indicating the "great science." In the Golden Dawn it refers to the hypothetical or honorary ⑨=② grade associated with the sephirah of Chokmah.

Maim: Hebrew for "water."

Major Arcana: The Greater Secret. Refers to the twenty-two tarot trumps.

Malkuth: Hebrew word for "kingdom," referring to the tenth sephirah on the Tree of Life.

Maltese Cross: A cross formed from four triangles. This symbol crowns the Praemonstrator's wand.

Meditation: The act of quieting the mind in order to listen for the inner communications or inspriation from the Higher Self.

Metatron: Possible Greek translation: "Near Thy Throne." The archangel of Kether and the most powerful of all Hebrew archangels. Said to be the archangel who governs the entire Tree of Life generally, and the white pillar specifically. He is also the right-hand Kerub of the Ark of the Covenant.

Michael: Hebrew for "the perfect of God" or "He who is like unto God." The archangel of Hod. Also the name of the archangel of fire invoked in the LBRP.

Microcosm (also Microcosmos): The "Lesser Universe." Humanity as a reflection or miniature of the macrocosm.

Middle Pillar: The central pillar on the Tree of Life. The Exercise of the Middle Pillar is a Golden Dawn technique for awakening the sephiroth or Galgalim of the Middle Pillar within the magician's sphere of sensation.

Minor Arcana: The "Lesser Secret." Refers to the pip and court cards of the tarot.

Mystic Repast: A partaking of the elements. Similar to the Christian Eucharist. (See Eucharist.)

Nemyss: Type of ancient Egyptian headdress worn by Golden Dawn magicians.

Neophyte: From the Greek word *neophytos*, or "newly planted." A beginner. The Neophyte grade is the first initiation into the Golden Dawn. It is symbolized by the number 0 within a circle and the number 0 within a square ①=◻. A person who has been admitted into the grade of Neophyte.

Neophyte Adeptus Minor (N. A. M.): The first subgrade of the Adeptus Minor grade.

Neoplatonic: (See Neoplatonism.)

Neoplatonism: The last school of Greek philosophy, founded in the third century C.E. by Plotinus. Neoplatonism dominated Greek thought until the sixth century C.E. It combined the doctrines of Plato with oriental mysticism. Neoplatonists believed that reason alone could not satisfy the human soul.

Neshamah: In Qabalah, the highest part of the soul. The Greater Neshamah encompasses Kether, Chokmah, and Binah. The highest aspirations of the soul. The Neshamah proper, or intuitive soul, is found in Binah.

Netzach: Hebrew word for "victory," referring to the seventh sephirah on the Tree of Life.

Occult: From the Latin word *occuere*, meaning "to cover up." Hidden or secret. Occult wisdom signifies secret wisdom. Wisdom that is kept secret so as not to be profaned. Wisdom or knowledge that is not known to the masses. Divine wisdom that can only be communicated from within.

Opening of the Key: A complex method for reading the tarot used in the Second Order of the Golden Dawn. It utilizes five consecutive tarot spreads in a single reading.

Order: A brotherhood or fraternity. An association or society of like-minded people.

Orphic Mysteries: Also called Orphism. A religious cult of ancient Greece, attributed to Orpheus. The Orphics believed in the divine origin of the soul, but also the dual aspect of human nature as good and evil. They believed that by undergoing initiation into the mysteries, and through the process of transmigration, the soul could be freed from evil and attain eternal blessedness.

Outer Order: (See First Order.)

Paroketh: A boundary that exists between Tiphareth and the four lowest sephiroth on the Tree of Life. Often called "the Veil."

Pentacles: One of the four tarot suits attributed to the element of earth and the Qabalistic world of Assiah. A pentacle is a magical diagram, usually round, inscribed on parchment, metal, or some other material to create a talisman. Also, one of the elemental tools of a Golden Dawn magician.

Pentagram: A geometric figure based on the pentangle, which has five lines and five "points." Figures based on the pentangle include the pentagram and the pentagon. The pentagram or five-pointed star is attributed to the five elements of fire, water, air, earth, and Spirit. Sometimes called the "Blazing Star," "wizard's foot," the "Star of the Magi," and the "Star of the Microcosm." Also called the pentalpha because it can be constructed out of five Greek alphas.

Pentagram Ritual: Any ritual that employs the pentagram as its primary symbol. Often refers to the Golden Dawn's Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram.

Pentagrammaton: A Greek word that means "five-lettered name." Refers to the Hebrew name of YHShVH יהושׁוּעַ Yeheshuah or the Hebrew name of Jesus, which is the Tetragrammaton, YHVH יהוה, with the letter Shin ש placed in the center of the name. (See Yeheshuah, Tetragrammaton.)

Philosopher's Stone: In Latin it is *Lapis Philosophorum*. An alchemical symbol of the transmutation of humanity's lower nature into a higher, more purified spiritual state. In practical alchemy, the stone signifies the manufacturing of gold from a base metal. In spiritual alchemy, it is the transmutation of the lower into the higher. A symbol of true spiritual attainment and illumination. The search for the Philosopher's Stone is the search for ultimate truth and purity. (See Alchemy.)

Philosophus: Comes from a Greek word that means "lover of wisdom." The Philosophus grade is the fifth initiation into the Golden Dawn, and the last of the four elemental grades that comprise the First

Degree of the Order. It is associated with the element of fire and the seventh sephirah of Netzach. It is symbolized by the number four within a circle and the number seven within a square ④=7. A person who has been admitted into the grade of Philosophus. The plural form is Philosophi.

Phylakissa: A female Phylax.

Phylax: Greek word meaning "sentinel." An officer who guards the Neophyte Hall.

Pillar of Mercy: The right-hand pillar on the Tree of Life, comprised of the sephiroth of Chokmah, Chesed, and Netzach. The White Pillar is called Jachin.

Pillar of Mildness: Also called the Middle Pillar or the Pillar of Equilibrium. The central pillar on the Tree of Life comprised of the sephiroth of Kether, Daath, Tiphareth, Yesod, and Malkuth. (See Middle Pillar.)

Pillar of Severity: The left-hand pillar on the Tree of Life, comprised of the sephiroth of Binah, Geburah, and Hod. The Black Pillar is called Boaz.

Pip Cards: The forty numbered cards of the Minor Arcana of the tarot.

Portal: The intermediate grade between the First and Second Orders of the Golden Dawn. The Second Degree of the Order.

Practicus: The fourth initiation into the Golden Dawn, and the third of the four elemental grades that comprise the First Degree of the Order. The name *practicus* indicates one who is just beginning to put theory into practice. It is associated with the element of water and the eighth sephirah of Hod. It is symbolized by the number three within a circle and the number eight within a square ③=8. A person who has been admitted into the grade of Practicus. The plural form is Practici.

Praemonstrator: Latin word meaning "guide" and "one who prophesies." The teacher. One of the three Chief Officers in the Neophyte Hall.

Praemonstratrix: A female Praemonstrator.

Prisci Theologi: The "Pristine Theologians." Namely Moses, Hermes Trismegistus, and Zoroaster—considered by Renaissance philosophers as the three great spiritual teachers of the world who foreshadowed the teachings of Christ.

Psyche: The Greek word for "soul." The mind functioning as the center of thought, emotion, and behavior. The incorporeal portion of a psychophysical being. It includes both conscious and unconscious functions.

Psychic: Of or relating to the psyche. Also, a person who is susceptible to psychic influences or energies. A sensitive.

Puffers: False alchemists.

Qabalah: Hebrew word meaning "tradition." It is derived from the root word *qibel*, meaning "to receive." This refers to the ancient custom of handing down esoteric knowledge by oral transmission. What the word *Qabalah* encompasses is an entire body of ancient Hebrew mystical principles that are the cornerstone of the Western Esoteric Tradition.

Qabalistic Cross: A short ritual that is incorporated into the LBRP. The Qabalistic Cross forms an equilibrated cross of light in the magician's sphere of sensation.

QC: The Qabalistic Cross.

Qliphoth: A Hebrew word meaning "shells." Chaotic and unbalanced forces or entities. Evil demons. Fallen spirits. Negative opposites of the harmonious sephiroth. The singular form is Qlippah.

Quintessence: The "fifth essence." Refers to Spirit, which is sometimes referred to as the fifth element. That which binds together and governs the four elements of fire, water, air, and earth.

R. R. et A. C.: (See *Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis*.)

Raphael: Hebrew for "Healer of God." The name of the archangel of Tiphareth, also the name of the archangel of elemental air, invoked in the LBRP.

Right-Hand Pillar: (See Pillar of Mercy.)

Rising on the Planes: A method of astral work that developed out of the Golden Dawn's technique of Traveling in the Spirit Vision. This is a purely spiritual process that uses the Qabalistic Tree of Life. The magician's consciousness is placed within the astral body, which ascends the various levels of the Tree.

Rites of Eleusis: (See Eleusinian Mysteries.)

Ritual: A formalized ceremony including a series of actions, physical as well as mental, that results in the release of magical energy and the fulfillment of a specific objective.

Ritualist: One who performs rituals.

Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis (R. R. et A. C.): The Second or Inner Order of the Golden Dawn system hierarchical structure.

Rose Cross: A key symbol of the Golden Dawn's Second Order. It is based on the Rosicrucian symbolism of the Red Rose and the Cross of Gold. The Rose Cross Lamén is worn by Adepts.

Rosenkreutz, Christian: The allegorical founder of the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross. Sometimes referred to as C. R. C. (See Rosicrucian.)

Rosicrucian: (See Rosicrucianism.)

Rosicrucianism: A mystical, philosophical movement that emerged in the seventeenth century and spawned several secret organizations or orders concerned with the study of religious mysticism, alchemy, Qabalah, and professing esoteric spiritual beliefs. The symbolism of Rosicrucianism is primarily Christian and the Rosicrucian path emphasizes the way of transformation through the Christ impulse. (See Rosenkreutz, Christian.)

Ruach: Hebrew word for "breath," "air," and "spirit." The middle part of the Qabalistic soul representing the mind and reasoning powers.

Samothracian Mysteries: Named for the Greek island of Samothrace. Said to be the oldest of the Greek mystery religions. (See Kabiri.)

Sandalphon: The archangel of Malkuth. Said to be the archangel who governs the black pillar. She is also left-hand Kerub of the Ark of the Covenant. (See Metatron.)

Second Degree: The second of three degrees in the Golden Dawn system. Includes the only the Portal grade.

Second Order: (See *Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis*.)

Seer: (See Skryer.)

Sepher Bahir: The "Book of Brightness," a twelfth-century Qabalistic text ascribed by some to have been written by Rabbi Nechuniah ben Hakana, a Talmudic sage of the first century. The *Bahir* describes the meditative methods of the ancient Qabalists, particularly with regard to the sounds of the Hebrew letters in mantras, etc.

Sepher Yetzirah: The "Book of Formation." The name of one of the oldest of the Qabalistic texts. It was circulated in varying oral forms until around 100 B.C.E. to about 200 C.E., when it was standardized. The text describes the formation of the universe by comparing it with the creation of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. A brief tract from the Hebrew text written in 1642 by Joannes Stephanus Rittenbergius, called "The Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom," was later added to the *Sepher Yetzirah*.

Sepher Zohar: The "Book of Splendor," a huge Qabalistic text first published in the fourteenth century, but alleged to have been written by Simeon ben Yohai. The *Zohar* includes commentaries on the Torah. Moses de Leon is the probable author.

Sephirah: (See Sephiroth.)

Sephiroth: Hebrew word meaning "numbers, spheres, emanations." Refers to the ten divine states or god-energies depicted on the Qabalistic Tree of Life. The singular form is sephirah.

Shaddai El Chai: Hebrew phrase meaning "Almighty Living God." Divine name of Yesod intoned in the Middle Pillar Exercise.

Shadow: In Jungian psychology, the sum of all personal and collective elements that are rejected or refused expression in life and consequently unite into a somewhat independent splinter personality.

Shem ha-Mephoresh: Hebrew phrase meaning "the Seventy-Two-Fold Name of God," said to be an extension of the Tetragrammaton. A divine name of 216 letters derived from three verses in the biblical book of Exodus (Exodus 14:19–21). One of the systems of temurah (gematria) is used on these verses to obtain 72 names of God, which are each assigned to one of the 72 quincunxes (sets of five degrees) of the zodiac. The names of 72 angels are formed by adding the suffixes "yah" or "el" to the 72 God-names.

Shewstone: A crystal orb used for skrying.

Sigils: Seals, signs, or signatures. A symbol used to represent a spiritual force, such as an angel, archangel, or a divine name of God. Any name or word can be made into a sigil.

Sign of the Enterer: Also called the Projection Sign, the Attacking Sign, and the Sign of Horus. It is one of the two grade signs of a Neophyte of the Golden Dawn.

Skry: Derived from the old English word *descry* meaning "to see" or "to observe." A form of clairvoyance that usually uses mirrors, crystals, a bowl of water, or other gazing devices. The skrying device is an aid to concentration that helps the skryer calm and focus the conscious mind, inducing a trance state that allows spiritual visions to come through.

Skryer: One who skrys. A Seer.

Skrying in the Spirit Vision: Skrying as performed by the Golden Dawn is usually done by using a painted symbol, such as a tattva card or elemental symbol, rather than a crystal or mirror to skry into. Geomantic symbols, planetary symbols, or tarot cards may also be used for this procedure. Similar in some ways to astral projection.

Skrying Symbol: Any symbol used as an astral doorway for skrying.

Sophia: Greek for "wisdom."

Solve et Coagula: Latin phrase meaning "dissolve and coagulate." Alchemical axiom that points to the practice of reducing a solid to a liquid and back to a solid again. Used as a metaphor for the practice of psychotherapy and self-integration, or the magical processes of initiation and spiritual growth.

Soul: The middle portion of the threefold constitution of man: body, soul, and spirit. The soul is the personal part of an individual and the mediator between the physical body and the divine spirit.

Soul of the World: (See *Anima Mundi*.)

Sphere of Sensation: A term used by Golden Dawn magicians to describe the aura.

Spirit: The transcendent fifth element that unities and governs the other four elements. The vital principle or animating force within living beings. Also, a sentient, incorporeal entity. The highest portion of the threefold constitution of man: body, soul, and spirit.

Spiritualism: A movement that began in America around 1848. In Spiritualism, receptive individuals known as mediums are said to receive messages from deceased human beings and communicate with otherworldly entities while in a passive, trance state.

Stella Matutina: "Morning Star." The name of one of the three offshoot orders of the Golden Dawn after the collapse of the original order. The largest and longest-lived offshoot.

Stolistes: Greek word meaning "preparer." An officer in the Neophyte Hall who is in charge of all regalia and purifications.

Subtle Body: The psycho-physical circuitry of a human being through which the life force flows. Energy blueprint for the physical body. Sometimes called the astral body, etheric double, or body of light.

Summum Bonum: The "Highest Good."

Supernal: Celestial or heavenly. In Qabalah, it refers to the three highest sephiroth on the Tree of Life, which are often called the Supernals or the Supernal Triad.

Swastika: (See Fylfot Cross.)

Swords: One of the four tarot suits attributed to the element of earth and the Qabalistic world of Yetzirah.

Synchronicity: A word used by Carl G. Jung to describe meaningful coincidences that have no apparent or explainable connection.

Syncretism: Union or fusion of differing systems of belief, as in philosophy or religion.

Talismans: Objects that are charged or consecrated toward the achievement of a specific end. Usually intended to draw something to the magician.

Tarot: A deck of cards containing esoteric images used for divination. A tarot normally has seventy-eight cards in all, twenty-two of which are trump cards that relate to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet—collectively called the Major Arcana. The remaining fifty-six cards are known as the Minor Arcana. The tarot appears to have originated in fourteenth-century Italy.

Tattva: Sanskrit word meaning “quality.” The five main tattvas (Prithivi, Vayu, Apas, Tejas, and Akasa) correspond to the five elements of earth, air, water, fire, and Spirit.

Telesma: The energy that is put into a telematic image used to activate and charge the image.

Telematic Image: A created or visualized image of a deity or angel, particularly images that have been built up in the imagination using Hebrew letter correspondences. Each letter in the angel’s name contributes a portion of the constructed image through its esoteric associations.

Tetragram: Greek for “four lettered.” A divine word or name composed of four letters. Also refers to a geomantic figure composed of four lines. There are sixteen tetragrams used in geomancy.

Tetragrammaton: A Greek word meaning "four-lettered name." Refers to the highest divine Hebrew name of God, YHVH יהוה.

Thaumaturgy: Greek word meaning "miracle-working." Magic used to create changes in the material or lower world.

Theoricus: Comes from the Greek word for "beholder," "onlooker," or "student." The Theoricus grade is the third initiation into the Golden Dawn, and the second of the four elemental grades that comprise the First Degree of the Order. It is associated with the element of air and the ninth sephirah of Yesod. It is symbolized by the number two within a circle and the number nine within a square ②=9. A person who has been admitted into the grade of Theoricus. The plural form is Theorici.

Theoricus Adeptus Minor (Th. A. M.): The third subgrade of the Adeptus Minor grade.

Theos: Greek for "God."

Theurgia: (See Theurgy.)

Theurgist: "God-worker." A magician. One who performs theurgy. (See Theurgy.)

Theurgy: Greek word meaning "God-working." Higher magic used for personal growth, spiritual evolution, and for closer alignment with the divine. The type of magic advocated by the Golden Dawn.

Third Degree: The last of three degrees in the Golden Dawn system. Includes grades of the Inner Order.

Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom: The ten sephiroth and the twenty-two paths that connect them.

Three Alchemical Principles: Three fundamental substances in alchemy that are said to exist in all things. They are sulfur, mercury, and salt, which relate to the ideas of soul, spirit, and body. These substances are not to be confused with ordinary substances of the same name.

- Three Negative Veils:** The Ain, the Ain Soph, and the Ain Soph Aur. Three abstract stages or levels of "nothingness" from which emanated the Tree of Life. The Veils of negative existence defy all attempts to describe them.
- Tiphareth:** Hebrew word for "beauty," referring to the sixth sephirah on the Tree of Life.
- Transmutation:** The process of changing from one form, substance, nature, or state to another. In alchemy it refers to the changing of something base into something higher or more sublime.
- Tree of Life:** In Hebrew, *Etz ha-Chayim*. A glyph or symbol that is central to the Qabalah. It is a symmetrical drawing of ten circles or spheres known collectively as sephiroth, arranged in a certain manner with twenty-two connecting paths running between the spheres. It is considered a blueprint for understanding all things and relationships in the universe, including the essence of God and the soul of humanity. (See Qabalah; Sephiroth.)
- Trionfi:** Italian for "triumph." Refers to the trumps cards of the tarot.
- Uriel:** Hebrew for "Light of God." Archangel of elemental earth, invoked in the LBRP.
- Vault of the Adepti:** The ritual chamber of the Second Order.
- Ve-Gedulah:** Hebrew for "and the Glory." Refers to Chesed. Intoned in the QC.
- Ve-Gevurah:** Hebrew for "and the Power." Refers to Geburah or Gevurah. Intoned in the QC.
- Vibratory Formula:** A method by which divine names and words are intoned forcefully and with authority in a "vibration." Properly performed, the vibration should be felt throughout the entire body and imagined to be vibrated throughout the universe.
- Visualization:** The practice of imagining something, such as a place or deity, with intense clarity.

Wands: One of the four tarot suits attributed to the element of fire and the Qabalistic world of Atziluth.

Western Esoteric Tradition: (See Hermeticism.)

Words of Power: A divine name or word intoned in ritual that is said to have magical potency.

Yeheshuah: Also called the Pentagrammaton, a Greek word that means "five-lettered name." This refers to the Tetragrammaton or "four-lettered name" YHVH, with the letter Shin placed in the center of the name. Thus, the four elements of YHVH (fire, water, air, and earth) are completed, crowned, and governed by a fifth, Spirit, resulting in YHShVH יהוהשׁוה. (See Pentagrammaton.)

Yehovashah: An alternative for Yeheshuah.

Yesod: Hebrew word for "foundation," referring to the ninth sephirah on the Tree of Life.

Yetzirah: The "World of Formation." The third of four Qabalistic worlds or stages of manifestation and the realm of angels. Yetzirah is attributed to the spheres of Chesed, Geburah, Tiphareth, Netzach, Hod, and Yesod. It is attributed to the element of air and the Hebrew letter Vav. (See Four Qabalistic Worlds.)

YHVH: Four letters, Yod Heh Vav Heh, which stand for the highest Hebrew name for God, whose real name is considered unknown and unpronounceable. These letters are also attributed to the four elements of fire, water, air, and earth. Often referred to as the Tetragrammaton or "Four-Lettered Name." Sometimes incorrectly referred to as "Jehovah." (See Tetragrammaton.)

YHVH Eloah ve-Daath: Divine Hebrew name of Tiphareth meaning "Lord, God of Knowledge." Intoned in the Middle Pillar Exercise.

YHVH Elohim: Divine Hebrew name of Binah, meaning "the Lord, God." Associated with both Binah and Daath when intoned in the Exercise of the Middle Pillar.

Zelator: Comes from the Greek word for "zealot." The Zelator grade is the second initiation into the Golden Dawn, and the first of the four elemental grades that comprise the First Degree of the Order. It is associated with the element of earth and the tenth sephirah of Malkuth. It is symbolized by the number one within a circle and the number ten within a square ①= 10. A person who has been admitted into the grade of Zelator.

Zelator Adeptus Minor (Z. A. M.): The second subgrade of the Adeptus Minor grade.

Zohar: (See Sepher Zohar.)

Zoroaster or Zarathustra: (c. 628–551 B.C.E.) An Iranian religious leader and reformer, priest, and founder of Zoroastrianism, or Parsiism as it is called in India. Along with Moses and Hermes Trismegistus, Zoroaster was considered by Renaissance philosophers as one of the great spiritual teachers of the world—the Prisci theologi—who had foreshadowed the teachings of Christ.

Zoroastrianism: The religion founded by Zoroaster.

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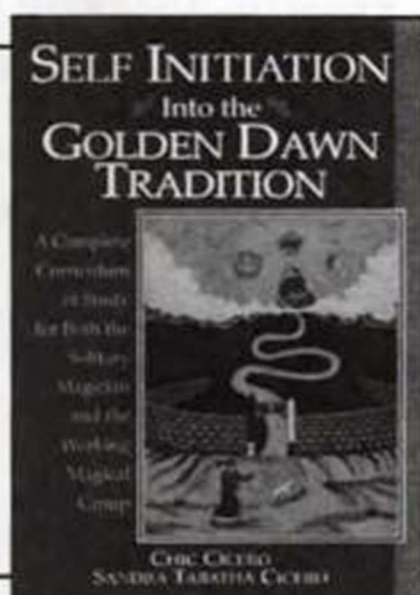
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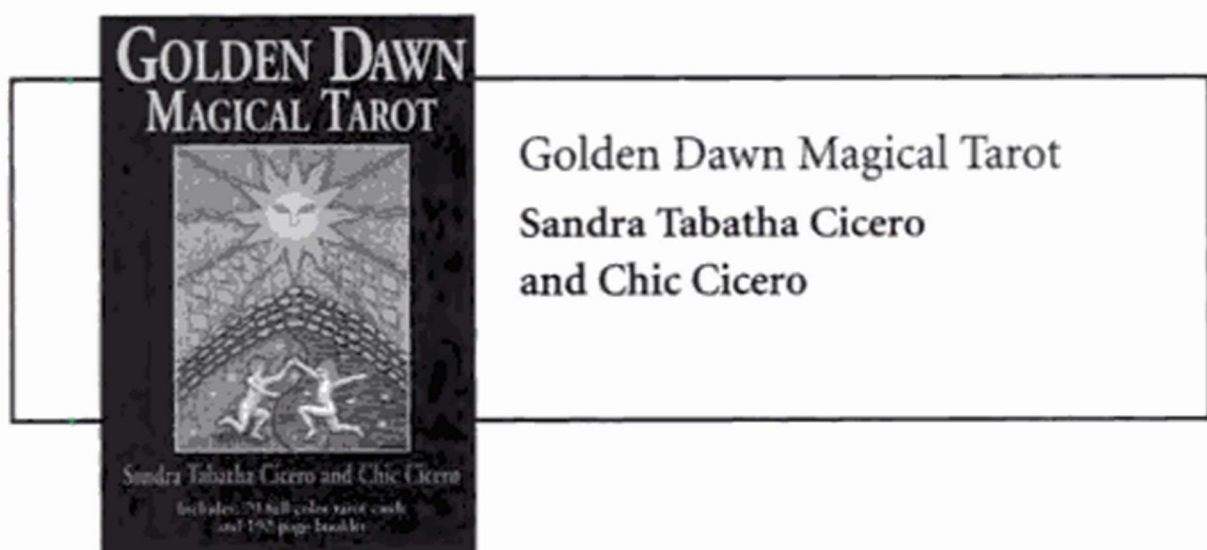
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